

IRISH LEGISLATION;

OR

TWO WAYS TO MEET A CRISIS.

ORIGINALLY DEDICATED, BY SPECIAL PERMISSION,
TO THE LATE RIGHT HON. LORD GEORGE BENTINCK, M.P.

BY

ROBERT MAHON ALLEN.

"Political Economy, considered as a branch of the science of a statesman or legislator, proposes two distinct objects:—1st. To provide a plentiful revenue, or subsistence for the people, or more properly to enable them to provide such a revenue or subsistence for themselves. 2ndly. To supply the state or commonwealth with a revenue for the public services, it proposes to enrich both the people and the sovereign."—ADAM SMITH.

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1849.

TO THE
RIGHT HON. LORD GEORGE BENTINCK, M. P.

MY LORD,

The strenuous but unsuccessful efforts of your Lordship to mitigate the sufferings of the starving millions of Ireland, under an unexampled visitation of Divine Providence, by the destruction of the potato crop of 1846, and the sincerity of your Lordship's motives being fully demonstrated by the fact of your consenting to the ports being opened for six months, for the admission of foreign corn, at the time that your Lordship was most zealous in maintaining the principles of Protection,—as a tribute of respect for such generous and self-denying conduct, this pamphlet is most respectfully dedicated, with the special permission of your Lordship,

By your Lordship's

Most obedient humble servant,

ROBERT MAHON ALLEN.

DUBLIN, 1st January, 1848.

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PREFACE.

THE latter part of the year 1846, and the entire of 1847, replete as they were with so many circumstances of a painful character—the fact that the food of six millions of people having been destroyed by the unerring wisdom of Omnipotence—evoked the slumbering energies of many who had neither time, inclination, nor ability for taking an active part in that gloomy drama which shall never be obliterated so long as Ireland has a history.

I happened from my vocation to be one of those who witnessed the dreadful strides of Famine and her twin sister Pestilence, which devastated every province, county, town and village in Ireland, whilst no means were taken—the Labour-Bill excepted—to avert the crisis. I addressed the following letter to the Prime Minister; and it was requested by a great many persons in Ireland and Scotland, into whose hands a copy of the letter had fallen, that it should be perpetuated in the shape of a pamphlet: this compliment being paid to my first public production, written under the impulse of sorrow at the certain consequences which then flitted palpably before my imagination—the downward tendency of every existing interest, the certainty that society would be shaken to its foundations, and above all, the vast amount of human life that must pay the forfeit—induced me to watch the progress of affairs, the policy of the statesman

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who had the management of that dark, decisive and ever memorable era, the remedial measures proposed, and their corresponding results. I have endeavoured to demonstrate how a calamity, unparalleled as it was, might have been successfully combated and efficiently met, without loss of human life or serious detriment to any existing interest, by the adoption of the measures recommended in my letters.*

It may appear anomalous to dedicate a work to a dead man; but as I had the dedication written previous to the lamentable occurrence which deprived Ireland of her best friend, and the British Empire of one of its brightest luminaries, I have allowed the manuscript to remain unaltered, as a tribute of respect to the brilliant genius and honest and indefatigable exertions of that mighty spirit that has been eclipsed.

* A few weeks after the subjoined was written, I addressed another, which was not published, in which I advised the Premier to suspend (during the crisis) one-half the duty on tea; but, as I expected, it was also disregarded.

IRISH LEGISLATION,

ETC.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD J. RUSSELL, M. P.

MY LORD—The perils of a crisis will induce many persons to come forward and remonstrate with the responsible servants of the country, who would under ordinary circumstances maintain an observing silence, more particularly when each succeeding day fails not to reveal its proportionate increase of calamitous and heartrending occurrences, which must shock every individual possessing the remotest feelings of humanity. The same emotions will receive a double impulse when there is no exertion made from a quarter, where it is legitimately expected every means will be resorted to, to meet the contingency, and avert the frightful consequences which appear (so far as the human eye can penetrate) inevitable.

Your Lordship will excuse the rightful liberty exercised by the writer, who flatters himself not incompetent authority of his country's present sufferings, (borne with a praiseworthy and virtuous submission) occasioned by the dealings of a just Providence, who is too wise to err, too just to act unkind : who does not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men ; at the same time works His Sovereign will in such a mysterious way that we, short-sighted creatures, cannot comprehend, although persuaded that permanent good will emanate from the present visitation ; and even now apparently, under the frowns of His Providence, he retains a smiling face, and in the midst of deserved wrath will remember mercy.

The opportunities connected with my avocation, which for eight years have constantly brought me in contact with parties best acquainted with the wants and sufferings of the people in all parts of Ireland, induce me to presume myself, as

I have already asserted, not incompetent authority to proclaim to your Lordship as the responsible party, the destitution, the misery, wretchedness, and starvation of the peasantry, which, no doubt, your Lordship in the abstract is already in possession of, through official channels.

Allow me, my Lord, with regret, to be the medium of communicating to your Lordship, the general, I may say, with the most perfect confidence—unanimous opinion of this country that they have no confidence in your Lordship's abilities, as adequate to the emergency—worse still, the idea is entertained (whether right or wrong I do not presume to offer an opinion) that your Lordship is more anxious to support the monopoly of the provision merchants of the city of London, whose representative in Parliament your Lordship is, and which distinction your Lordship would not wish to peril—than the frightful cry of hunger which is ringing through the length and breadth of the land. Already former acts of Whig misrule, which would otherwise be generously buried in oblivion, come forward in all their ghastly aspects, and the cry of discontent, dissatisfaction, and want of confidence, is the theme of every member of the community, not alone of the uneducated, or of a class—but of the rank, intelligence, and education of the country, of all denominations, both lay and clerical. Your Lordship's Labour Act is denounced as the greatest political blunder ever enacted!! The subsequent proclamation of his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, respecting works of a reproductive nature, is a vote of censure on that bill; and while the community justly repose the most implicit confidence in the wisdom and discretion of our Chief Governor, we know his generous acts will be checkmated by a Cabinet who have neither the wisdom to foresee, nor the fidelity to perform the duties commensurate to the crisis.

Your Lordship's letter to the Duke of Leinster confirms the opinion of your Lordship's unwillingness and incompetency,—infinitely worse, it is believed that your Lordship wished to commit to irresponsible hands the paramount duty of

the Government to meet the crisis, and eventually to lay the blame at the doors of the Irish Landlords of any ulterior consequences that might happen.

Allow me to inform your Lordship that this TERGIVERSATION is unworthy and unbecoming the Prime Minister of the greatest empire in the world. Such political economy is not calculated to allay the fever of excitement which now rages in consequence of the apparent indifference and imbecility of her Majesty's Government; this is no comprehensive scheme of remedial legislation, exercised with a bold, manly, and statesmanlike fortitude.

There might be some palliation, if it were supposed that the duties of the government were so onerous, that other business equally affecting the public weal occupied their attention; but such is not the case—there is no foreign war threatening the empire—no intestine dissension distracting at home—no corn laws to be repealed—no additional grant to Maynooth College to convulse the nation, and divide parties—no comprehensive measure of legislation for the improvement of the moral and social condition of the people, (that can be imagined) engaging the consideration of the Cabinet. The patronage of the government has lulled agitation—party feeling has subsided—angry jealousies seem to have been forgotten, and, highly creditable, all hitherto conflicting parties seem to have merged into the paramount and praiseworthy duty of devising measures to save the poor from starvation. All is activity and exertion, except the paid servants of the country—even the maligned landlords are now demonstrating “*that property sometimes discharges its duties as well as enforces its rights!*” by involving their already overburdened properties in years of debt, and cheerfully undertaking what they are scarce able to perform, rather than allow their unfortunate countrymen to perish from starvation.

Your Lordship will naturally and reasonably remark, when a party censures the acts of others, he must have some definite remedial measures of his own to substitute. I am pre-

pared to suggest for your Lordship's consideration—nay, but for your Lordship's prompt adoption and immediate execution,

1st—Open the Ports,

2nd—Stop Distillation,

3rd—Increase the Absentee Tax 10 per cent,

4th—Extend the Income and Property Tax to Ireland on all nett profits, whether from income or other property, where such shall amount to £150 per annum ;

5th—Establish depots in every county for the storage of provisions purchased immediately by money from the Consolidated Fund.

The opening of the ports and the stoppage of distillation are acknowledged by all parties indispensable. This country may not be prepared for the imposition of the Income and Property Tax, but allow me to inform your Lordship, that for the last three months, during that time being constantly travelling, I have conversed with men of property, Protestant and Roman Catholic Clergymen, and in the discharge of the duties of my avocation, which brought me into the society of the principal commercial men in the different towns in the provinces of Leinster and Connaught, and proud I am to record a reciprocity of concurrence on this subject, and cheerfully would they contribute a small portion of their incomes—nay, even deny themselves and their families many gratifications and pleasures, for the noble cause of alleviating the wants of suffering humanity. Regarding the Absentee Tax, every man will acknowledge that there should be no absentees under present circumstances, they should remain at home and make common cause with their suffering tenantry, aid them by their advice in directing their attention to means whereby their sufferings would be mollified—assist them in proportion to their means—report their grievances to the legitimate quarters—assist the Government by precept and example, by inculcating obedience to the laws, encouraging the industrious to exercise perseverance, patience, and fortitude, and deterring the turbulent and lawless

from plunder and other acts of aggression. This would mitigate the evil and implant in the minds of the peasantry that their landlords are not regardless of their happiness, that there exists an identity of interests, and that they may always calculate on their assistance and co-operation in any unexpected emergency. Of the establishment of county depots for provisions purchased out of the funds of the country, it is not necessary for me to say one word by way of recommendation. From one end of Ireland to the other such is demanded, and the country is astonished that a minister dare for a moment to procrastinate. We pay a large sum for a naval force; the steamers of the country in commission remaining idle at the different ports or on experimental cruises, might be much more profitably employed in carrying corn to the different depots, and assisting private relief committees, who are, where the Government should be long ago, in the different markets, making preparations for a year of apparent unprecedented famine.

Your Lordship may not be inclined to recommend to her Majesty's Government the consideration of the Income and Property Tax, your Lordship having denounced it in your place in the House of Commons, when it was introduced by your predecessor, as "*inquisitorial*," but your Lordship must now admit how efficiently it has repaired the former ruinous policy of your Lordship, and enabled the minister of the day to make a vast reduction on articles of consumption. Its substitution now, in lieu of your Labour Bill, would not unjustly press on those landed proprietors whose estates are already so encumbered as to be unable to discharge their burdens, many of which are in the hands of receivers at the instance of creditors. Your Lordship already expounded the views of the Cabinet with regard to the non-interference with distillation, and it is known that your Lordship is pledged not to interfere with provision merchants.

But allow me, very respectfully to inform your Lordship,

that the blunders and imprudence of an individual or individuals are not to be considered as binding on a nation, when circumstances turn up requiring them to be rescinded, more particularly when these contingencies were never anticipated by the party who rashly committed himself to those pledges, and whose object we have no opportunity of ascertaining, whether it was to pander to a party, secure a position for himself or his friends, or the public interests.

But if your Lordship feels unequal to the emergency, or "*not strong enough for the situation!*" why, make an an honourable retreat. Nothing is more dastardly or disreputable than for a servant to retain, or rather usurp, a situation after his employer has given him significant hints of his inefficiency and disapprobation of his services; more especially when that servant on former occasions had all but ruined the interests of his employer, and was only hindered by an ignominious and immediate expulsion.

I feel no hesitation in telling your Lordship (and with deference) that her Majesty's Government might have done much, and with a criminal neglect, allowed opportunities to escape which cannot now be recalled or remedied, of averting a great deal of the present calamities. Your Lordship need not have distracted your inventive genius for schemes to meet the crisis. The noble and effective example of Sir Robert Peel must be vivid in your Lordship's memory, and ere this reaches its destination, your Lordship must have felt the nation's pulse calling aloud for the Right Hon. Baronet to come forward, and under Providence yet save the country from impending ruin.

If your Lordship is still determined to incur the additional responsibility of continuing in office, and that your Lordship has a head to think and a heart to feel and sympathise with suffering humanity, I conjure your Lordship in the name of my suffering country—in the name of Him at whose dread tribunal your Lordship and the writer must separately stand

and account for our respective stewardships, not to remain any longer supine and indifferent while things of such paramount importance demand your Lordship's most earnest and indefatigable exertions. Your Lordship can, by an order in Council, carry my suggestions into immediate operation. "Where there is a will there is a way," and doubt not for a moment but in the next session of Parliament your Lordship will get an honourable and grateful indemnification, in addition to the pleasure of your Lordship's approving conscience, when you reflect that your Lordship has been instrumental in meeting a mighty calamity with substantial and beneficial measures. On the other hand, if after the lapse of four or five months, when matters must of course be considerably aggravated, and your Lordship, with a sickening horror and the bitter knowings of self-reproach, takes a retrospect, and views the ravages of starvation, and the smouldering embers not yet extinguished of a nation's misery staring your Lordship in the face, what must be the bitter, tantalising, and unendurable pangs that shall rankle, nay, destroy your Lordship's future peace, and your Lordship's name descending to posterity with feelings of loathsome disgust and sovereign contempt. Will not every man then say—

"I'd rather be a dog and bay the moon,
Than such a Roman."

But hoping better things of your Lordship, and wishing your Lordship a more enviable fame; and as in duty bound to pray for "the powers that be," I do in all the fullness of my heart, that your Lordship may be enabled to exercise a sound discretion and a wise judgment in all things, and be the honoured instrument in the hands of Omnipotence in saving this empire yet from the dreadful consequences of Pestilence and Famine.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your Lordship's obedient humble servant,

ROBERT MAHON ALLEN.

Sligo, November 19, 1846.

WHEN it was ascertained beyond doubt that the blight had appeared in the potato crop, and was spreading with fearful rapidity, and all the experiments that scientific men could devise the previous season* were unable to arrest its progress; the gloom and despair that pervaded all classes of the community was dispelled by a temporary ray of hope by the following announcement from Lord John Russell, in his place in Parliament, in August, 1846, when he declared—"That the whole means of the country, the whole credit of the Treasury, should be employed rather than suffer the people to starve."

This declaration was hailed with delight and gratitude; many that were sceptical allowed their misgivings to subside; and, notwithstanding their gloomy forebodings, so noble and manly a determination from so distinguished a quarter, calmed their apprehensions and assuaged their fears. But this emotion of joy was subsequently considered only a bubble that was inflated to quiet the public apprehensions—a phantom bark that only looms in view in the midst of storms to afford an illusory hope to the shipwrecked mariner, who vainly imagines it a reality, and after exerting all his remaining energies, with one convulsive effort finds that the shadow has vanished, and leaves the wretch to writhe in all the agony of despair at his certain destruction.

Scarcely had the above paragraph been circulated on the wings of the press, when it was succeeded by the stern and laconic declaration of the Premier—"That they would not interfere with the course of trade." His views were more fully elucidated on that subject by the Secretary of the Treasury to Major Beamish, Cork :—

"We rely on the merchants of Cork to lay in ample stores of Indian corn, and other kinds of food, for the supply of that city and the adjoining country, without any assistance from the Government,

* In the month of October, 1845, Sir Robert Peel issued a commission for the purpose of discovering some antidote to arrest the *blight*, composed of the following scientific men, Sir Robert Kane, Professors Lyndley and Playfair, but all their experiments were fruitless; and although the object of the Commission failed, it does not detract from the merit that is so justly due to the statesman that originated it.

and our interference will be confined to remote districts, which cannot be expected to be sufficiently provided for by the *ordinary operations of trade*. (Signed), "C. E. TREVYLYAN.

"*Treasury, August 26, 1846.*"

The effect of such a determination was not without its immediate result:—The markets advanced; a monomania for speculation spread like some contagious epidemic; vessels were chartered at an unusually high rate; accommodation bills of exchange were circulated; merchants abandoned their accustomed pursuits, curtailing, and in many instances, breaking up their ordinary establishments, throwing their assistants out of employment, who, from a feeling of pride, would not return to their homes, but now swell the ranks of the army and man the fleets of the navy, not alone of Great Britain, but those of foreign nations. The provision merchants were to be protected, not alone of the city of London, the constituents of the Premier, but those of the United Kingdom. A general election must take place before fifteen months. The former contest at the preceding general election was so sharp that, with all the ministerial influence, the vast amount of patronage at the disposal of the first Lord of the Treasury, he had only a majority of nine votes. This was not to be perilled again. The Prime Minister must have a seat in Parliament; and that for the most influential constituency in the empire, at any cost. And "O! what millions died that Cæsar might be great." Political economy could be brought to bear, and shroud any mischief that might result. But this was not the political economy of Adam Smith, of which the noble lord is such an *admirer*, and which is eulogised by him when he goes to Scotland; but in London it will not do, it will not suit his purpose on the hustings. It is not the part of a statesman to turn merchant: it is degrading for a Government "to provide a plentiful revenue or subsistence for the people!"

But a statesman is a strange anomaly. One day he selects protection for his text, another day "protection is the bane of agriculture and the bane of commerce." Every person who has paid any attention to what occurred in the year 1845, in

the memorable month of November, when the “*Verbosa et grandis epistola venit*” of the Premier to the electors of the city of London, in which he has the paragraph just quoted—“Protection is the bane of, etc., etc.” Protection could no longer then exist; it must be destroyed. The free trade movement required it; but, superior to all, its death knell was the only passport to office. But circumstances alter cases; new years require new measures; the altered circumstances of the country require an alteration in the policy of a statesman; and, although protection was the bane of agriculture, and the bane of commerce, it must now serve another purpose: it must be the means of saving the people from starving. Accordingly the operations of trade are not to be interfered with; on the contrary, they must be *protected*: every barrier must now be removed, all opposition prostrated, and trade stimulated. The first step then is to create a class of corn-dealers. The Commissary General, Sir R. Routh, writes to the Marquis of Sligo, on the 14th October, 1846,—

“We have two great deficiencies to supply—mills and corn dealers. With regard to the high prices which it is alleged the dealers exact, we must bear in mind, that if an article is scarce, it must be dear, that a smaller quantity of food must be made to suffice for a longer period than is usual, and that the high price is the only criterion by which consumption can be economised. The interests of the intelligent dealer will always check the tendency to raise prices above their true level; or, at all events, the attempt will carry its cure with it, by disappointing him of his market.”

This then is the ministerial programme. Competition in the shape of corn-dealers must be raised. Speculation on the food of the starving poor encouraged, in the face of the fact stated on *undoubted authority*—“That those dealers exact the highest prices they can.” The labourer or mechanic who toils for twelve hours must curtail his allowance; instead of three meals he must be content with two, or perhaps one; and, forsooth, because the price is high, he must make a virtue of necessity, by restricting himself and his family in the necessaries, (not luxuries) of life. These *philanthropic* dealers will reverse

the maxim of buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest markets ; “ not raising the prices above their true level ; ” they are to be the sole arbiters of what amount of profit is “ the true level,” whether 20, 100, or 500 per cent. But there is something to deter them. “ The attempt will carry its cure with it, by disappointing him of his market.” But they can hold it over in expectation, and a certainty, of an advance, and the poor cannot enforce its sale, and still the cravings of nature must be satisfied in the mean time.

The following circumstance will shew how far the *generous* anticipations of the Commissary General were likely to be realised, which I have from an eye witness :—A corn dealer came into a coffee-room in Cork, folding his hands and shrugging his shoulders, called for a cigar and a glass of brandy and water, and said to a friend, whom he recognised, “ Is it not delightful what a cheering prospect, the markets are again advanced ? I shall hold over until it arrives at 120s. per quarter.”

Our ancestors seem to have imagined that the people would buy their corn cheaper of the farmer than of the corn-merchant, who they were afraid would require, over and above the price which he paid to the farmer, an exorbitant profit to himself. They endeavoured to annihilate his trade altogether ; they even endeavoured to hinder, as much as possible, any middle-man of any kind from coming in between the grower and consumer ; and this was the meaning of the many restraints which they imposed upon the trade of those whom they called kidders or carriers of corn, a trade which nobody was allowed to exercise without licence, ascertaining his qualifications as a man of probity and fair dealing. The authority of three Justices of the Peace was, by the statute of Edward VI. necessary, in order to grant licence ; but even this restraint was afterwards thought insufficient, and, by a statute of Elizabeth, the privilege of granting it was confined to the quarter sessions. By the 5th & 6th Edw. VI., chap. 14, it was enacted—

“ That whoever should buy any corn or grain, with intent to sell it again, should be reputed an unlawful engrosser, and should, for the first fault, suffer two months imprisonment, and forfeit the value of the corn ; for the second, suffer six months imprisonment and forfeit double the value ; and for the third, be set in the pillory, suffer imprisonment during the King’s pleasure, and forfeit all his goods and chattels.”

It may then be easily understood how diametrically opposite is the political economy of the present day to that which was considered necessary and wholesome in the sixteenth century ; we have no reason to suppose that, at the time the statute of Edward VI. was framed, there was any particular scarcity existing or anticipated, but solely that the wise maxim, “ Prevention is better than cure,” was acted on.

How indispensable was it then for a wise minister, regardless of every other consideration, compared with the lives of the people, to have deemed it his duty to follow up rigidly the example, and enforce, with all the authority of the Government, the policy of the sixteenth century, when it was a truism that the food of six millions of people had been destroyed.

It will be seen, however, from the following extracts, with what unbending firmness and dogged resistance the applications of benevolent individuals were disregarded. On the 5th October, 1846, Lord Mountcashel writes to the Editor of *The Cork Constitution* newspaper :—

“ SIR,—In consequence of the rapid and lamentable increase of misery in the district, the unaccountable delay in obtaining employment for the poor, I addressed, a few days since, a pressing letter to Sir R. Routh, begging, as an act of mercy, that he would allow me to purchase from the Commissariat stores, at Cove, two or three tons of Indian meal per week, in order to save the people from all the horrors of want, to which I received the following reply :—

“ ‘ Comy. General’s Office, Dublin Castle, Oct. 3, 1846.

“ ‘ MY LORD,—Commissary General Sir R. Routh begs to state, in reply to your Lordship’s inquiry of the 2d inst., that it is not *now* proposed to sell the Commissariat supplies at Cork or in any part of the country eastward of Skibbereen.”

Again, in reply to an application from Major Beamish, to Commissary General Hewetson, of the exorbitant price ex-

acted for Indian meal, by the retail dealers in the towns of Skull, Ballydehob, and West Carberry:—

“SIR,—I now subjoin, for your information, the extract of a letter from Sir R. Routh. ‘Our reserve supplies cannot be received from abroad, whence they must all come, until the end of November and all December; in the mean time, committees will have to fall back upon the resources of the country, which, at the present moment, are abundant. Our operations did not commence until the 1st of last month, and time must be allowed for the termination of the foreign harvests and the arrival of the new importations into the United Kingdom. It is not even then proposed to open our depots, while there are dealers who are ready to supply the public, *and who must be encouraged and protected* so long as their prices are within moderate bounds.’”

And then, again, in answer to Lord Bernard’s application, on the 10th October, 1846:—

“I have reason to believe that her Majesty’s Government continue to be decidedly of opinion that the public safety, as well as the public faith, indispensably require that the pledge given—that no interference will be exercised with the provision trade in the eastern divisions of Ireland—should be strictly observed.”

Mr. Labouchere, the Irish Secretary, writing on the 23d September, 1846, states—

“The Government will, as far as possible, adhere to the principle—That provisions shall only be sold at such prices as will allow of the private dealer selling at the same price with a reasonable profit.”

“At Castletown, Berehaven, County Cork, January 27, 1847, the Government officer informed the relief committee, that he had received orders *to raise* the Indian meal to £19 per ton, which he was selling the day previous for £18. The people, at the same time, dying in tens daily.”—*Cork Constitution*, Jan. 30, 1847.

A gentleman, living in the neighbourhood of Banagher, informed me that the Government purchased Indian meal at £8 per ton, held it over, refusing the most urgent applications from the poor to sell it at £10, and eventually sold it at £18.

At one of the largest meetings that was ever held in Dublin, convened by the nobility and gentry and clergy, for the purpose of taking into consideration the alarming state of the country, and to petition the legislature, and which is noticed more fully in a subsequent part of this work, Mr. Dillon Croker

read a communication from a Cork newspaper, from the Protestant Dean of Cloyne and Ross :—that in the western portion of his diocese alone, 5000 had perished from want, and that 10,000, at least, were at the point of death ; and, in the workhouse of Skibbereen, the deaths, from a certain period last year, averaged only ten or eleven, while, for this year, during the same period 288 had died, and 108 of these in three weeks. He (Mr. Croker) had received a letter from the Rev. Mr. Gayer, Dingle, stating, that while the people were dying daily, there were locked up in the Government stores 300 tons of meal for more than three months, which no entreaty could procure ; and that had this been distributed before this time many who are now in their graves would be alive and well.

The first evening of the session of Parliament, 25th Jan., 1847, Lord John Russell stated in his place in the House of Commons, that there was a depot in Mayo. The following may be placed in juxtaposition to it :—

To the Editor of *The Dublin Evening Mail*.

“SIR,—Amongst other false statements of the Government, is one that a depot at Westport was open, and food selling out of it for some months. This is not the fact. There are 150 tons of Indian corn there since August last, and the Commissary has over and over refused the committee to sell them a stone of it. It is said his pay and allowances amount to eight guineas per day.

(Signed),

“A CONNAUGHTMAN.

“28th January, 1847.”

“The application of the Board of Guardians of Tuam, Dunmore, and Headford, and other towns in the Union, having been referred to Sir R. Routh, he desires to state, that it is impossible to extend the Commissariat depot in the manner pointed out.

“Relief Committee Office, Dublin Castle, Sep. 22, 1846.

From these extracts it will be seen with what a callous disregard to the sufferings of the poor, the scenes of destitution that were daily trumpeted in their ears from all quarters, the revolting deaths from inanition, and the spread of pestilence, the Government met the applications of benevolent individuals, adhering to their mad and criminal doctrines of political econo-

my, with such frightful obstinacy ; sacrificing not the wants alone, but the lives of the many to the interests of the few, “by not interfering with the ordinary operations of trade”—the preservation of human life being, under every circumstance, the primary consideration ; every other interest sinking into perfect insignificance compared with this paramount obligation. If a house is on fire, the first idea that presents itself to the mind is to rescue, and place beyond jeopardy, the lives of its inmates ; even the lives of animals will take precedence of any other property, and an endeavour will be made to save them from the devouring element, even though the most costly jewels, the most splendid furniture, and the most sacred reminiscences of by-gone days, of family memorials be destroyed in the conflagration. In the same way, if a ship is in danger from being cast on a rock, or any other of the many contingencies that attend a seafaring life, to save the lives of the passengers and crew engages supremely the thoughts of the commander, irrespective of any property he or they may have on board. Every person, without hesitation, will admit that the wealth of the world is not equivalent to the loss of one human life, no matter how humble that individual may be in society. The man that preferred his own interest, even though himself and his family might be reduced to poverty and ruin by its loss, if in the rescue of it he allowed the loss of a human being, would for ever be denounced and execrated with a virtuous indignation. How much more criminal is it for a Government which is paid so liberally by the nation for the express purpose of watching their interests and ministering to their wants in time of need, not to anticipate contingencies and be prepared with remedial measures. A Government should not be waiting for calamities to happen, or for a crisis to take place, before they are prepared. If they have not the wisdom to foresee, they are unfit to govern. It is expected that a Government should not be an apprentice, but having been previously skilled in the art, and having a

perfect knowledge of the business, should be capable of executing the undertaking to the satisfaction of the employer. It is the perfection of folly, as well as consummate cruelty, to preach the doctrine of self-reliance—"help yourselves and heaven will bless you"—to a starving people. There is a time for all things; occasions when such maxims are wholesome, opportune, and necessary, and a time when they are fulsome and ridiculous. It required no great elasticity of mind, no extraordinary stretch of intellect, no towering genius, no magnanimous effort in the face of an *ascertained fact*, that, by an inscrutable decree of Omnipotence, the food of six millions of people had been destroyed beyond remedy, to make up for that calamity, when there was a surplus revenue of ten millions sterling in the national coffers—the fields of America teeming with fertility, in so much, that the President of the United States, in his official message to Congress, declared "that they had as much corn over and above their own wants as would be required by the rest of Europe"—and we having plenty of ships and steamers in commission, at an enormous expense to the nation, idle at the different ports and stations, which should have been employed carrying over part of this corn.

The application of a distinguished and philanthropic member of the Legislature, Wm. Sharman Crawford, soliciting the Government to afford a few ships, I believe, to charitable committees, in consequence of the enormous high rate of freight demanded by ship-owners, received the following answer from the Premier :

"But it would be attended with this consequence, when once it was known that vessels of her Majesty's fleet were engaged in this service it would operate as a great discouragement to the merchant shipping."—*Extract from Lord John Russell's speech in the House of Commons, Friday, February 20, 1846.*

On the 26th February, 1847, Messrs. Camman and Whitehouse, New York, in a letter to a friend, in London, write the following paragraph :

“The high rates of freight, and scarcity of vessels, checking shipment of produce, a considerable amount of capital is absorbed by the necessity of holding the large quantities which are constantly arriving from the interior.”

Another writer from the same place, and inserted in *The Times* newspaper, 18th March, 1847, states :

“You will be pleased to learn that, from Maine to New Orleans, the whole country is aroused for furnishing Ireland, and our contributions will be large and continued throughout the Spring. But we are in a woful state for want of vessels ; and, unless you send the requisite number, we shall not be able to transport our surplus. When Lord John Russell said that there would be ships enough to take over our Winter supplies, he made a great mistake, he forgot that the cotton and tobacco crops would require a large fleet of themselves, and that the Government had abstracted some fifty vessels to send troops to Mexico. The present want of tonnage will, probably, exist for some time ; indeed, the means of conveyance for the immense quantities of our products, yet to go forward, becomes a matter for serious consideration. We must look for a supply of shipping from your side ; and, we hope, our *advanced quotations* may be a sufficient incentive to ship-owners to direct their ships this way. The New Orleans market now labours under great disadvantages, arising from high and increasing rates of freights and the difficulty of shipping.”

Notwithstanding these facts, the Government remained faithful to their fatal pledge—not to interfere with the merchant shipping. Prices were still advancing far beyond the reach of the poor who were dying in hundreds daily ; the want of ships gave an additional impetus to those *highly favoured* regraters and forestallers to retain the stocks of provisions they had on hands and push their fortunes further. I have been told, from good authority, in Liverpool, that, in several instances, a bill of lading, of a cargo of corn *expected*, passed through sixteen hands, paid sixteen profits before the vessel arrived in the port ; and these sixteen profits added to the prime cost, the extravagant freight, and other incidental expenses, raised it to a famine price ; and this was the mode the *benignant* Government took to feed the people.

The Government of the United States, from mingled feelings of disgust and benevolence, placed at the disposal of

charitable committees, in their own country, several of their war vessels to carry bread-stuffs to the famishing Irish; the first of which was *The Jamestown*, whose officers were entertained at a public dinner by the citizens of Cork, but very coolly by the Government officials in Ireland; in fact, beyond the common formality of a cold official letter, this humane mission was not further noticed; there was no complimentary visit, which common courtesy would suggest, as due to the American flag, or an invitation to the Castle of Dublin, to the commander and officers. No doubt the British Government must have keenly felt the rebuke; the antithesis was too galling, and seeing their own duty evinced by the voluntary act of a stranger, the circumstance must have afforded them no pleasure, but rather the poignant stings of remorse, for such a wilful dereliction of duty.

But there was another vessel visited the shores of Ireland, from the United States, freighted with additional supplies. It was the *Macedonian* frigate; and there is something connected with the history of this ship not very palatable for our Government. This vessel was formerly in the British Navy, and during the successful war of the United States—under a Whig Government—when they achieved their independence and separated from Great Britain, this ship was captured from the British, and remains in the service of America, whether from her utility or as a trophy is best known to themselves.

About six years ago, when it was generally expected that a war between England and America was almost certain, in consequence of the arrest of a Colonel M'Leod by the American authorities, for being connected with the destruction of a vessel called *The Caroline*, the British Government having espoused his cause, "*identified themselves with the act*" for which he was arrested, imprisoned, and afterwards tried by the American law; while this trial was pending, every preparation was made, as in the event of his conviction and punishment, a war was inevitable between the two countries,

from the declaration of her Britannic Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. In the interim, printed forms were issued by the Government of the day to the different steam companies in the United Kingdom, to ascertain their tonnage, power, and capabilities, for the ostensible object of engaging them against the United States; fortunately, the trial of M'Leod terminated in an acquittal, and averted a disastrous, inglorious, and unprofitable war. If, therefore, the British Government applied for the assistance and co-operation of the mercantile marine, under an apprehension of war, how could they refuse the ships of the country to import provisions to save the British subjects from all the horrors of starvation; and, it is needless to reiterate, that human life is of greater consequence than any point of national honour that might lead to a disruption between these countries. A victorious army would never destroy an unopposing, defenceless people. The bravest man is always the most humane; so that even from a successful war that might have been gained by fields of carnage and rivers of blood, the inhabitants of this country would be perfectly safe. But grim hunger spares neither age nor sex; it gives no quarter; all must pay the forfeit, and that the most revolting of deaths.

How different was the conduct of the Emperor of Russia: he did not leave the sustenance of his subjects to the tender mercies of speculators. The following mandate was issued from St. Petersburg on the 18th May, 1847:—

“The Minister of the Interior has addressed the following circular to the Government Chiefs:—‘By an ordinance addressed to me by the Secretary of State, his Majesty the Emperor has been pleased to command, that to provide against exhaustion of the reserve corn magazines by the speculations which, in all probability, will take place this Summer in corn, his Majesty desires most *authoritatively* to impress upon the Government Chiefs and Marshals, as they are most responsible, to see that the quantity of corn fixed by law be laid up in all the reserve magazines. His Majesty the Emperor intends to appoint officers to make a tour of inspection; and, in case any irregularity and deviation being observed, they shall be authorised to make a judicial report to his Majesty thereof.’”

There was something like energy, decision, and promptitude in this proceeding; the wants of his subjects were not to be left “to the ordinary operations of trade.” This was not the political economy of the Irish Commissary General, as enunciated in his dispatch to the Marquis of Sligo; this was grappling courageously with a crisis, by a potentate deeply anxious, and sincerely solicitous for the preservation and sustenance of his subjects; and, it appears, that the King of Bavaria was similarly influenced from the following announcement in August, 1847:—

“The King of Bavaria has given *strict* orders to the principal authorities to watch that no speculator shall attempt to buy new corn beforehand, in order to keep up the prices.”

Such were the examples of despotic sovereigns, as regards the zealous and anxious care they evinced for the happiness of their subjects—the caution they exhibited, lest, by the traffic in human food, human life should pay the ransom; and what a contrast to the conduct of those imbeciles who had, unfortunately, the management of affairs in that gloomy time in this doomed country.

Soup kitchens established in many places by charitable individuals, for affording relief, were discountenanced by the “*paternal*” Government, for the reason that it would interfere with speculators in bringing down the markets, and hindering those avaricious regraters from realizing their exorbitant profits. The following correspondence with the Earl of Rosse will demonstrate this:—

“Parsontown, 18th Nov., 1846.

“SIR,—I have the honour to inform you that there was a meeting of the Relief Committee here yesterday, at which I was present; the amount of subscriptions is above £500. I believe at Clonmel and Carlow a quart of soup or porridge is given gratis to each person, and a small loaf of coarse bread is sold at the same time at first cost, if required. I understand that the soup or porridge alone is sufficient to sustain life, and that relief has thus been afforded in other places on a large scale, and at a moderate cost. In supplying cooked food gratis, probably you will not see the same practical evils as in giving away meal, or even selling it, at first cost—

"1st.—The fair dealer is not interfered with.

"2d.—There is that proper pride amongst the poorer classes that they will not take cooked food unless they are in absolute want.

"3d.—There is little danger of abuse, as cooked food is not likely to be re-sold. It is also observed that there is some economy of fuel in cooking food on a large scale, and that the process is more thoroughly performed.

"Should the experiment succeed, it is hoped that very many will be enabled to struggle through without going to the poor-house. Having, at the request of the committee, undertaken to apprise you of their decision, I should be glad to know if it meets with the concurrence of the Commissary General.

(Signed),

"ROSSE."

"Commissariat Relief Office, 24th Nov., 1846.

"MY LORD,—Commissary General Sir Randolph Routh has considered the proposal in your Lordship's letter of the 18th inst., to provide cooked food with the Relief Fund, and to sell the food at less than the cost, or distribute it gratuitously, as may be necessary. Although the arrangement may not apparently interfere with traders, it would discourage them, by providing subsistence on terms which must preclude their intervention.

"The Commissary General could not therefore recommend a donation to be made in aid of subscriptions so applied."

By a recent act of Parliament, it was provided—"That wherever a Relief Committee were able to collect a certain sum for mitigating distress, a similar sum was to be added out of the money ordered by the act, the same to be paid by the Commissary General." But here it was refused.

Such then was the line of conduct our rulers thought proper to adopt and to cling to with such a criminal tenacity; the condemnation of public meetings were as little regarded as the benevolent solicitations of charitable individuals.

On the 17th October, 1846, there was a public meeting of the Roman Catholic Clergy in Westport, when the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

Resolved—"That although most reluctant to cast blame on her most gracious Majesty's present advisers, we are compelled to charge them with all the horrors of starvation and slow death which we daily and hourly witness, from the nature of our avocations.

Resolved—"That we cannot sufficiently express our condemnation of the policy of the present Government, in their unnatural solicitude for the mercantile interests of this unfortunate country at the expense of millions."

These sentiments, emanating from men unwilling to censure a Government who were always favourable to the claims of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, require no comment.

In Galway, at a coroner's inquest, convened on the 14th January, 1847, to inquire into and ascertain the cause of the death of a woman named Mary Cummins, twelve men on their oaths, deliberately recorded the following verdict:—

“ We find that the deceased Mary Cummins died from the effects of starvation and destitution, caused by a want of the common necessities of life; and, as Lord John Russell, the head of her Majesty's Government, has combined with Sir Randolph Routh to starve the Irish people, by not (as was their duty), taking measures to prevent the present truly awful condition of the country, we find that the said Lord John Russell and the said Sir Randolph Routh are guilty of the wilful murder of said Mary Cummins.”

On Thursday, the 14th January, 1847, an aggregate meeting was held at the Rotunda, attended by twenty-one Peers, thirty-five Members of Parliament, Deputy-Lieutenants, and Magistrates from all parts of Ireland—in fact one of the most important that was ever held in Ireland—for the purpose of expressing their opinions of the alarming state of the country; and as the Legislature was to assemble on the 25th of the same month, for the dispatch of business, it was considered necessary to record their sentiments of the past as well as what they judged indispensable for the adoption of her Majesty's Government: the most noble the Marquis of Ormond in the chair. Sir Montague L. Chapman, Bart., M.P., (a strenuous supporter of Government) stated,—

“ Two great subjects necessarily came before the committee, and pressed on their immediate attention—1st. ‘ The awful state of famine under which the country was suffering.—2d. The equally terrific waste of the public resources.’ The committee believe that the shipping of the country should be employed in bringing food to its shores. They believe that the use of sugar and molasses in distillation should be permitted, and that the grain now used in such purposes might go to feed the people, and add to the national supply. They believe the portion of the Navigation Laws which interfere with the commerce of the world, and prevent the importation of food into this country, should be suspended. The committee also declare their opinion, that the present system of road employment,

however useful in finding employment for the labourer, has been most successful in interrupting the internal communication of the country. The committee calls for the immediate stoppage of that ruinous system, and the substitution of a means of employment more suitable to the wants and condition of the country. They (the committee) thought it was not sufficient to point out merely the measures of relief that should be at the moment adopted, but also thought it right to allude to those *mischievous* consequences of the past legislation."

This report was received and unanimously adopted by the meeting; and, although couched in the mildest language, the reader of it being a staunch supporter of the Government, it was condemnatory of their policy, and a vote of censure for their tardiness, by neglecting to carry those measures recommended by the committee, as the exigency of the crisis imperatively demanded.

It was afterwards proposed by George Alex. Hamilton, M.P., seconded by Daniel O'Connell, M.P.—

"That the object of this meeting is to save society from the ruin by which all classes in the land are now threatened, and to preserve the country from confiscation."

During the proceedings of the meeting, Captain Bernal Osborne, M.P., formerly an Aide de Camp to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, under a Whig administration, stated,

"He (Mr. Osborne) was a political supporter of the present Government, and if they were determined to act on the principles of Sir Randolph Routh, that they were determined to move an amendment to the address, and, by their united votes, to turn out the Government."

In relation to the same subject, Henry Grattan, M.P., also a supporter of the Government, declared—

"He was willing to go the whole way and support Mr. Osborne, by moving an amendment to the address—'If the Government did not send plenty of food into the country, and at once take immediate measures to prevent the confiscation of their properties.'"

And, on the 16th March, 1847, at a public meeting of the citizens of Dublin, the following resolution was unanimously adopted :—

“ Moved by William Henry Fitzgibbon, Esq.; seconded by Thomas Dixon, Esq., J.P.:—*Resolved*, ‘ That it is the first duty of Government to employ the powers of the State to protect the lives of the people, whether perilled by war, pestilence, or famine; that in Autumn last this duty required the Government to employ the vessels and resources of the State to bring food from foreign countries, and by every means in its power to provide a substitute for the food that was lost; that it manifested indifference to the lives of five millions of her Majesty’s Irish subjects, or ignorance of the principles of trade or commerce, in having left the food of this multitude to be supplied by merchants; that the capital and ships of merchants are fitted to the trade they carry on, which consists in the exchange of commodities between the classes in different countries that have products to exchange; that the ships and capital of merchants could not reasonably be expected to be withdrawn from their usual trade, to supply a demand so sudden and so extraordinary, which alone could be adequately met by new and extraordinary powers of supply commensurate with the magnitude of this new demand; that had the Government in Autumn last, expended one million in the purchase of corn in America, and employed the vessels of the State in bringing it home, and through relief committees disposed of it to the labouring people at its cost price, sending back the proceeds to purchase more, so long as the scarcity lasted, it would not have interfered with the trade of merchants, in supplying the wants of their usual customers, the property classes; that it would have supplied a new carrying power, suited to the new demand, and greatly increased the imports of food; that it would have kept the prices within reach of the labourers’ wages, and thus saved the people from the extremities of famine, without any great loss of the public money and resources; that waiting, without any attempt on the part of the Government to bring food into the country, until famine began to kill, and then purchasing food in the home market, had the effect of deranging the operations of trade—of rendering its channels inadequate to supply the classes depending upon them—of bringing into prominent view the disparity between the demand and the means of supply—of enormously raising the profits of merchant importers—of cruelly raising the price of the necessities of life, and of bringing thousands within the jaws of famine, who would have escaped had Government entered into competition for the food of the poor Irish labourer with the consumers of the world in the foreign market, rather than with their own citizens in the home.’ ”

Although the Government were most urgently requested to convene Parliament early in November, from various quarters, and by many influential persons, in order that some legislative

enactment might be speedily carried, in the shape of a remedial measure, as a panacea for the destitution, misery, and starvation which had extended over the length and breadth of the land. This step was considered indispensable, as her Majesty's ministers had refused to incur the responsibility of recommending anything to be done by an order in Council; but this remonstrance met the same fate as any former request, and was cruelly disregarded. The Government knew very well that all the solicitations of individuals, the resolutions of public meetings, the petitions of deputations, could be shelved and consigned to the "tomb of the Capulets;" but the moment that Parliament assembled, they knew that they should abandon their do-nothing policy. They could anticipate the meed of indignation that was overflowing the public mind; they saw the pernicious and fatal effect of their political economy; they felt that the ordinary operations of trade, or rather the interests of the provision merchants of the city of London, would no longer be tolerated, or their avaricious passions pandered to; and that one measure, at all events, discouraging, if not fatal to the regraters, must take precedence of any other business, namely,—“The opening of the ports.” Accordingly, when it could no longer be protracted, a virtue was made of necessity, and the combined wisdom of the nation did *actually* meet on the 25th January, 1847. Many were the speculations as to the “comprehensive” measures that were to emanate from the beneficent Government. Surmises were made; opinions were ventured; and rumour, with her thousand tongues, prognosticated many things: amongst the rest—“that we had seen the worst;” that the black cloud which hung on the declivities of the mountains would be radiated by some brilliant act of legislation; and some mighty scheme matured to counteract a mighty calamity. These were the views entertained by many. While the thinking portion of the community were not so sanguine, they checked their aspirations with the flattering unction—“Blessed is he that expecteth

nothing, for he shall not be disappointed ;” and recollected the fable of the mountain that was in labour, when some mighty phenomenon was expected to be the offspring of such a stupendous convulsion of nature, when lo ! to their chagrin and disappointment, out crept a little mouse.

On that memorable evening,

With all its measures, bills, and blunders,
The Budget peeped into this world of wonders ;

and the Prime Minister concluded a harangue of some five hours length, with the following peroration :—

“ I see no reason why Ireland may not become a state enjoying the greatest prosperity. I will give you a description of a country where property is secure, and where life is safe, where it is stated that the whole of the inhabitants are in a state of poverty and destitution—and being turned out of their habitations without food or clothing, or the least means of defending themselves from the inclemency of the weather—where men and women, husbands, wives, and their children were left to wander about the country in a state of destitution and famine, where the young men were alike without employment or the desire for it, and the old had no place to rest themselves—where the only resort that they had was in begging or stealing. That was an impartial description of a country where property is secure, and all the enjoyments of life have been ready. This shows that the evils that now afflict Ireland do not depend upon the country itself, but arise out of the state of society there, where the wretched families are now described as being driven from their homes, and have no resource but in begging or stealing. This is a description of wealthy, secure, happy England, by Sir Thomas More, in his time. In this description it is stated that the people roved about in bands of from 200 to 800 at a time, who lived entirely by stealing or begging, taking cattle from the fields, and committing such excesses, that not any thing or any place was safe. In such numbers, indeed, did the people roam, that it is said that as many as seventy thousand thieves, rogues, and vagabonds were hanged in one day. I will now turn to the state of society in another country, where an equal degree of prosperity is known to prevail. It is the description of the country at the end of the 17th century, and in this description it is stated that so great was the number of families that had been driven from their own homes, that as many as 200,000 to 300,000 individuals were known to be prowling about the country, living by stealing and begging from door to door. It was indeed believed, that 100,000 persons who were continually on the prowl about the country, and though the poor peo-

ple who lived upon farms would give relief to as many as forty persons in one day, yet they could not avoid being insulted, or protect themselves from the commission of the most grievous depredations. Such is the description of industrious sober Scotland at the end of the 17th century. It shows that a country which has been without order, where robbers were—where industry was neglected, may afterwards become orderly and civilised, and I think we should be unworthy of our position as Members of Parliament, if we were to give way to despair, in the present case. Sir, I know, however, that what I have touched upon relating to the social state of Ireland—touching as I have done upon many important measures—is but a part of the case. I am not one of those who think, that apart from political questions—from political rights—from other questions connected with political institutions—a merely beneficent Government can restore a country to prosperity and happiness. It is my opinion that other means will be required, and when the proper time comes for preparing such measures, I shall be ready to undertake anything for the benefit of Ireland; but, Sir, I feel that, with respect to these and all other measures, that there are things which the Crown cannot grant, which Parliament cannot grant, such as a spirit of self-reliance, a spirit of perseverance. I must say plainly that I should indeed despair of this task, were it not that I think I see symptoms amongst the people of Ireland both of a greater reliance upon their own energies—their own exertions—and a greater willingness to co-operate with us. I believe that they will encourage this spirit amongst themselves—I believe that they will see what has been done in this country and in her neighbour Scotland, by industry, by perseverance, by never despairing of success—that they will go on in this spirit, not looking always to Government for proposals, and to Parliament for enactments, but see what is the task immediately before them, and set themselves down heartily and strenuously to perform that task, and prove that there are means and resources in Ireland which may bring these matters to a happy issue. There is no doubt of the fertility of the land. Its fertility has been the theme and admiration of the writers and travellers of all nations. There is no doubt either of the strength and industry of the inhabitants. The same man who is loitering by the mountain side in Tipperary or in Derry—whose potato crop has just furnished him with occupation for a few days—whose wages and whose pig have just enabled him to pay his rent, and eke out a miserable subsistence, has perhaps a brother in Liverpool, Glasgow, or London, who, by the sweat of his brow, from morning till night, is competing with the strongest and stoutest labourers, and is earning wages equal to any of them. I do not think, therefore, that either the fruitfulness of the land, or the strength or the industry of the inhabitants are to be blamed. There have been faults, it is true—

there have been differences—but happy will it be for us if we lay the foundation for the cure of these differences. Happy will it be, if the Irish themselves take for their maxim the precept, ‘Help yourself, and Heaven will help you,’ and then I trust that they will find that there have been uses in adversity.—(The noble Lord then resumed his seat amid protracted cheering.)

Lord John Russell's Speech in the House of Commons, on the State of Ireland, on Monday Evy., Jan. 25, 1847.

These sentiments, as might have been expected, were received with shouts of acclamation. There was still a hope against hope; the flickering light had not altogether disappeared from the socket—the little star was not yet eclipsed in the horizon, and it was hoped would emerge from the cloud and illuminate this gloomy orb. Still there was a diversity of opinion, and the thinking portion of the empire expressed themselves again, and scepticism seemed to preponderate. These sentiments, they said, were noble and philanthropic—no doubt meant well—might suit a tyro statesman, who, in all the enthusiasm of immatured and inexperienced policy, might sincerely wish to improve the moral, social, and physical condition of the people, vindicate his own fame, and obtain a niche chiselled deep in that column, for posterity to laud and emulate.

But!! (this monosyllable is very awkward occasionally) a statesman to give expression to such a prologue, who has been fully a quarter of a century playing on the boards, and acting the principal part of the drama, and still at the beginning of the piece, was illusory and ridiculous. It might be well said—

“Round him much embryo, much abortion lay,
Much future ode and abdicated play;
Nonsense precipitate, like running lead
That slipped through cracks and zigzags of the head.”

The session was mostly occupied by the introduction and discussion of two bills—The Sale of Encumbered Estates, and the Sanitary Condition of Towns—which were subsequently abandoned, owing to their inability to carry them; and the time which was most precious was thus squandered, and the only

measure carried was the Extended Poor Law. It was decreed, that the land in Ireland must support its poor. No doubt the principle was good, laudable, and humane, but it was accepted in a different spirit.

Those perpetual whiners and everlasting grumblers were now in a fix. They considered that the fable of the stork and the frogs was exactly their case; but, be that as it may, it is not my object to prove or gainsay. One thing is certain, that it did not come into operation until thousands had died of starvation. It was like hanging a man first and trying him after.

The next matter that the Prime Minister imagined necessary for the exigencies of the country was the cropping of the lands for the next harvest, and a measure of greater importance never entered a statesman's mind. On the first night of the session, he states :—

“There was another proposal, of which, though of doubtful tendency, he was inclined to try the experiment. He proposed to advance £50,000, to be repaid on or before the 31st of December, 1847, to the proprietors of Ireland, to furnish seed for sowing their lands; he did not intend to advance any part of it to the small cottier tenantry, as it might not be used for the purpose for which it was intended, but he thought if the advances were made to the proprietors of the soil the measure might be safe and useful.”

This declaration was hailed with delight and gratitude; it was considered to be a ratification of the promise made by T. J. Parker, in charge of the Commissariat district at Clifden, in a communication to Henry Blake, Esq., Renvyle, dated October 19, 1846, he writes :—

“I am aware of the unwillingness of the people to sell their grain; grounded on the fear that they will find it difficult to replace it for seed. But Sir Randolph Routh has provided against this, by importing rye and bere for seed.”

This pledge, coupled with the subsequent statement of the Premier, just quoted, induced the people both to sell a part of their grain, and consume the remainder in food. “But there are many slips between the cup and the lip.” The words of a statesman are, in many instances, capable of two

meanings. And when the time arrived for the seed-corn to be put in the earth, and the proprietors of the soil considered they had nothing to do but ask the seed-corn, "either rye or bere," oats or barley, they were astounded by the following letter of Mr. M'Cartney, of Lisanoure Castle, a Deputy-Lieutenant of the County of Antrim. On the 27th February, 1847, he wrote :—

"I waited on Sir Randolph Routh, on Friday, the 26th February, for the purpose of claiming a loan, when he stated it was not the intention of the Government to make any advances for seed-corn ; his duty, and that of the Commissariat, as regards seeds, being strictly confined to the issuing of some peas and beans then on the way, and seeds for green-crops, which had been purchased by the Treasurer, as advised by Mr. Trevelyan, to be issued from the Commissariat stores in Ireland, only upon the orders of Relief Committees, and that no seed-corn, or funds for procuring same, should be issued, the growing opinion in England being against any such interference in such matters."

An anonymous production appeared in *The Edinburgh Review* for January, 1848, called "The Irish Crisis." After I perused a few pages, I was satisfied the author, who feared to attach his name, was a placeman. It appeared, however, that having failed in that shape to attract that degree of public attention which, no doubt, he desired, after nearly a year's intervention, he bounds enclosure, and re-publishes it in a pamphlet, and Sir Charles Trevelyan, Secretary to the Treasury, acknowledges himself the author.

In page 273 of *The Review*, is the following paragraph :—

"One of the remedial measures proposed by the Government at the commencement of the parliamentary session of 1847, was to make loans to landed proprietors to the aggregate amount of £50,000, to enable them to provide their tenants with seed, which loans were to have been repaid out of the produce of the crops raised from the seed, BUT NOBODY AVAILED HIMSELF OF THIS BOON."

Contrasting the letter of Mr. M'Cartney with the above paragraph, it is evident the Secretary of the Treasury must have either wilfully stated a falsehood or was completely ignorant of the matter he wrote on ; but, under any circumstances, it would have been more creditable to him to have continued in

his retirement as an anonymous pamphleteer than attach his signature to such an erroneous assertion.

After a perusal of these conflicting statements, it cannot be supposed that this was, to say the least of it, straightforward, as the people were completely thrown off their guard by depending upon the high authority of the Prime Minister of Great Britain; and when the proper time had arrived for cropping their lands, the application for seed is made, but refused. Fifty thousand pounds had been voted for that specific purpose; but it was to be given for the purchase of seed for green-crops, say turnips. Fifty thousand pounds would supply turnip-seed for 333,000 acres, at 1s. per lb., allowing 3lbs. to the acre, whilst it is a melancholy fact there are not 20,000 acres of tenant land prepared or fit to receive such a crop in Ireland. And what was to become of the balance voted, £47,000? Was that large sum to be squandered with paying a staff of officials? There must have been some cogent reasons for refusing corn-seed and substituting seed for green-crops; one of which is explained by Mr. Labouchere, the Irish Secretary, in his place in Parliament. On the 2d March, 1847, he states,—“As to the measures the Government had taken for the distribution of a supply of seed, he had lately received a communication from a member of the Irish Government, which would enable him to answer the question. ‘We have found it perfectly impracticable to get a sufficient supply of corn for seed without serious interference with the markets; green-crop seed alone therefore will be supplied.’” That is the cause assigned—“better late than never.” The markets would be interfered with, which, at the moment the Irish Secretary was speaking, had advanced to famine prices:—Indian meal selling at £18 per ton, and all other bread-stuffs in proportion. It would have been better not to have spoken about corn-seed at all, than such a flagrant breach of faith; but, to cover the defection, seed for green-crops would be substituted. It could never be imagined that turnips were

intended as an esculent; but they would feed cattle, and the markets of England would be, by this means, abundantly supplied with the usual supply of Irish beef and mutton.

I happened to be in the town of Galway, and carelessly taking up one of the local newspapers, I saw a statement made "That a Government steamer had arrived with a cargo of seed-corn, that circulars had been issued to the farmers some twenty miles adjacent, inviting them to come in and purchase at prime cost, 1s. 5d. per stone." A violent editorial article arraigned the official in charge for having disposed of the cargo in the interim to a corn merchant in the town, and when the farmers had arrived in compliance with the terms of the circular, instead of purchasing at 1s. 5d. per stone, they were obliged to purchase from the merchant—not at market price, which was at the date of the circular, 2s.—but this circumstance actually enabled him to raise the market still higher, and the unfortunate farmers were obliged to pay 2s. 2d. after their long journeys.

During my peregrinations, in relating this act, I was met with the argument, by the friends of the Government, that I was not to place confidence in newspaper reports. But I determined on my next visit to Galway to ascertain, if possible, the truth or falsehood of the statement; and happening to be invited to a friend's house, on my return to Galway in two months afterwards, among other guests I was introduced to Mr. —, Acting Commissary General; I availed myself of the opportunity, and introduced the matter. He told me he had seen the article in the newspaper—that the cargo of seed-corn was not the property of the Government, but belonged to the British Association—the steamer was lent by Government—the circulars had been issued to the farmers—the cargo sold to the merchant, but the steamer could not remain; and as to the statement in the newspaper, he did not think it necessary to take any notice of it.

So much for the accuracy of newspaper reports; and it will

be seen how the Government had the audacity to frustrate the object of the British Association, in their benevolent undertaking.

How different were the measures adopted by Sir Robert Peel's Government to meet the partial failure of the potato crop in 1846. They purchased, early, at a very low rate, large quantities of Indian corn—directed the attention of merchants to its importation, while the Government supply prevented them realising exorbitant prices—distributing assistance through Relief Committees, under the superintendence of a Committee, appointed on the 27th November, 1845; and keeping in reserve a store of biscuits, ready, if necessary, to be applied to feed the people, and some additional preparations to obtain, at a short notice, an additional supply of Indian corn; they had, also, ninety-three depots established for these reserve supplies, which were reduced by the Government of Lord John Russell to twenty-four; and, in the months of November and December, 1846, under the Government of the latter, only 638,932lbs. of meal were distributed, while during the two months previous, under the former system, 23,257,000lbs. were distributed. Instead, therefore, of an increased distribution, as should have been the case during a crisis, there was a diminution from the quantity distributed of 22,618,068lbs.

If the Government had only performed their duty, in appropriating the money voted by the Legislature for the wise purpose of averting another famine, from an insufficiency of crops not being duly sown, by reason of the poverty of the people in being obliged to eat what they would have reserved for seed, what would have been the happy state of Ireland? Our fields would have teemed with unusual fertility, our storehouses crammed to excess, from the fact that, within the memory of man, never was there so prolific a harvest. The great Benefactor of the Universe did bless us with more than an average crop—even the absence of disease in what was con-

sidered a doomed esculent ; and the potato, the greatest of God's gifts, the most suitable vegetable that was ever planted in Ireland—remunerating to the farmer, and wholesome and nutritious for man and beast, which has again given evidence that it has not taken its final exit ; and although it was disregarded and spurned, we shall again, under the blessing of the Almighty, be favoured with its perennial visits ; and instead of despising it, we shall, for the future, appreciate it with gratitude and thankfulness. If a sufficiency of corn had been sown, we would not have had the gloomy Winter that was then before us ; what was sown was so fruitful that a day of public thanksgiving for an abundant harvest was ordered by the Queen in Council, and celebrated on Sunday, the 17th day of October, 1847. But, notwithstanding all this, the cry of distress was again heard ; and I assert, that if the wise precaution had been taken, as was contemplated by the Legislature when it cheerfully voted £50,000 for supplying seed for the coming season, instead of the dismal cry of hunger and destitution, it would have been supplanted by the dulcet notes of plenty and happiness.

The potato crop was introduced into Ireland by Sir Walter Raleigh, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and planted in the vicinity of Youghall ; they were also planted in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh in 1744, and shewed symptoms of disease in 1844, a singular coincidence, of a century from the time they were planted to the time they shewed signs of decay. As regards this being the most productive root, and so wholesome as an esculent, Dr. Adam Smith in the year 1776, writes :—

“ The food produced by a field of potatoes is not inferior in quantity to that produced by a field of rice, and much superior to what is produced by a field of wheat. Twelve-thousand weight of potatoes from an acre of land is not greater produce than 2,000 weight of wheat.

“ The food, or solid nourishment, indeed, which can be

drawn from each of those two plants is not altogether in proportion to their weight, on account of the watery nature of potatoes.

“Allowing, however, half the weight of this root to go to water, a very large allowance, such an acre of potatoes will produce 6,000 weight of solid nourishment; three times the quantity produced by an acre of wheat. An acre of potatoes is cultivated with less expense than an acre of wheat, the fallow which precedes the sowing of wheat more than compensating the hoeing and other extraordinary culture which is always given to potatoes. Should this root ever become, in any part of Europe, like rice in some countries, the common and favourite vegetable food of the people, so as to occupy the same proportion of the lands in tillage which wheat and other sorts of grain for human food do at present, the same quantity of cultivated land would maintain a much greater number of people and the labourers being generally fed with potatoes, a greater surplus would remain after replacing all the stock and maintaining all the labour employed in cultivation, a greater share of the surplus too would belong to the landlord,* population would increase, and rents would rise much beyond what they are at present. The land which is fit for potatoes is fit for almost every other useful vegetable. If they occupied the same proportion of cultivated land which corn does at present, they would regulate in the same manner the rent of the greater part of other cultivated land. In some parts of Lancashire, it is pretended, I have been told, that bread of oatmeal is a heartier food for labouring people than wheaten bread; and I have frequently heard the same doctrine held in Scotland. I am, however, somewhat doubtful of the truth of it. The common people of Scotland, who are fed with oat-

* All these effects have been produced. The rental of Ireland in 1778, was computed at six millions, and the present rental is very nearly fourteen millions. Population has also increased in proportion; and as the Irish labourer is content to marry if he can find a poor cabin to accommodate his family, and potatoes to feed them, the country is fully peopled in proportion to its food.

meal, are in general neither so strong nor so handsome as the same rank of people in England who are fed with wheaten bread. They neither work so well nor look so well; and as there is not the same difference between the people of fashion in the two countries, experience would seem to shew that the food of the common people in Scotland is not so suitable to the human constitution as that of their neighbours of the same rank in England. But it seems to be otherwise with potatoes. The chairmen, porters, and coal-heavers in London, and those unfortunate women who live by prostitution, the strongest men and the most beautiful women, perhaps in the British dominions, are said to be, the most of them, from the lowest rank of people in Ireland, who are generally fed with this root. No food can afford a more decisive proof of its nourishing quality or of its being peculiarly suitable to the health of the human constitution."

THE Government measure for giving employment to the people, called the Labour Bill, was so imperfect, degrading, and mischievous, that before its importation it was actually arrested, convicted, and condemned. Its provisions were simple enough:—In every barony which the Lord Lieutenant proclaimed in a state of distress, Extraordinary Presentment Sessions were to be held, at which the magistrates and cess-payers were to have the power of presenting for Public Works to an indefinite extent, subject only to the control of the Board of Works. The sums so presented were to be at once advanced by the Treasury, to be replaced by instalments that would spread the re-payment of the entire with interest over a period varying, at the discretion of the Treasury, from four to twenty years.

Roads, bridges, and quays, it was found were the only things that could be considered as Public Works. The rate of wages to each labourer being, restricted to ten pence per diem. No sooner had this measure become the law

of the land than its demoralizing character and mischievous tendencies were perceived by the Earl of Besborough, then Chief Governor of Ireland, who expostulated with the Cabinet on its inefficient and pernicious provisions, which, however, had no weight, and his Excellency took upon himself the great responsibility of suppressing the whole measure, in opposition to the wishes of the Cabinet—thereby annulling “the greatest political blunder that ever was enacted,” and for which he was liable to be impeached. This “vote of censure” on the bill, the strangulation of the Cabinet bantling, no doubt gave great offence to the other Ministers, and so incurred their disapprobation, that his Excellency tendered his resignation, and it was currently reported that the Premier came over privately to Dublin, personally to entreat of his Excellency to retain the Viceroyship, as it was certain that his Excellency’s retirement would be the means of breaking up the Government.

His Excellency, writing on the 28th September, 1846, states —“It is not intended that the works should be confined to roads or any works which can be fairly considered of a public nature, but such as would tend to the permanent improvement of the surrounding districts, and those which may be expected to be reproductive should be preferred.”

The Cabinet and the Viceroy were at issue on this point: one party preferring the money to be squandered on useless and mischievous works, and the other recommending and persisting in having the money beneficially expended in improving the surrounding districts, by works of a reproductive nature,—as the following extract from a letter addressed by the Premier to the Duke of Leinster, on the 17th October, 1846, will illustrate:—“When the case was brought before the Government by the Lord Lieutenant, we lamented the *wrong* direction in which the act had been turned.”

Notwithstanding this decisive step on the part of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, who is not a member of the Cabinet,

they found him a more resolute subaltern than they expected ; on that occasion, unfortunately, however, for the country, the Cabinet Bill, as originally framed, was carried out. Its egregious defects consisted in the absence of any one improvement where its operations were felt ; while its degrading character alienated the people from their legitimate avocations in neglecting their own holdings, by not putting them in a suitable state for the reception of seed for the ensuing Spring ; it was also a bounty to idleness, for they preferred ten pence per day on the Public Works, where they might eke out the day to one shilling for a fair day's labour for useful purposes. In the next place, it was a wilful squandering of the national finances collected from the industry of the empire ; and again, it was impeding the public and private conveyances, and killing the already half-starved horses, whose allowances of corn were so considerably curtailed. The correspondence of the empire and the operations of trade were intercepted by the irregularity of the mails ; fares for travelling were considerably advanced, in consequence of the almost impassable state of the roads, and, in many instances, the regular conveyance discontinued. Mr. Charles Bianconi, the enterprising car proprietor, was necessitated to withdraw a dozen of his cars, to the serious inconvenience of the community, in consequence of the high price of corn, and the impassable state of the roads, which were in capital order before, but at the caprice of the Government were torn up, and remain yet unfinished, now fully more than two years.

It might indeed be said of the noble Premier—" This man began to build, but was not able to finish." He seemed to be one of those individuals who would leap over a mountain, but stumble at a straw. There is one thing certain, if he did not bound the hill, he was determined to cut through it, and thus exemplifying the adage.

Another of its effects was, that it subverted the securities on land, and no nation in the world was so unable or so unprepared for interference with its mortgages, as Ireland. If a party

had a mortgage on a landed property, say for ten thousand pounds, before advancing that sum, he, of course, first ascertained if the property be worth it and interest, the expense of foreclosing, &c. ; supposing then, that after making the necessary inquiries, he found that the property would barely cover his debt with the legal expenses to sell it, what would be his surprise to find that a debt had been saddled on that property by the Government to the amount of three thousand pounds, which of course would take precedence of his or any other debt ? and if it so happened that circumstances obliged him to call in his money, by selling that property, he should first indemnify the Government, and lose, by this unexpected enactment, three thousand pounds and the interest ; and this independent of the fluctuating value of land, which this year, in Ireland, was so seriously depreciated by the failure of the potato crop. I happened to be present at the selling of a small property in the Court of Chancery, in July last, 1847, which was knocked down at five hundred pounds per annum ; the same party offering eight hundred pounds in the month of October previously, was refused.

Another great hardship the Labour Bill imposed on the proprietor was—that it actually demanded payment of a debt which he had no funds to meet, endeavouring, perhaps, to retain the family estate without emolument or gain ; and, perhaps, struggling to relieve it of its burdens by diligence and industry, rather than allow it to pass out of his hands, dear to him by many associations of parentage and birth.

Finally, it was most oppressive and unjust that the people of England and Scotland, particularly the industrious classes, such as merchants, professional men, bankers' and merchants' clerks, the majority of them with limited salaries, unequally taxed, and, with the articles of consumption dearer in those countries than in Ireland, more especially as funds could have been raised amongst the wealthy landed and funded proprietors of Ireland, who could well afford to pay a per centage

out of their *bona fide* incomes for the support of the poor. I remember reading an account of an individual who died in Dublin, in the beginning of the year 1847, and leaving £274,000 in cash, and house property worth £4,000 per annum, who never paid one farthing of it to the Imperial Treasury; and it is certainly very unequal justice to make a mercantile clerk in England or Scotland pay an Income-tax, and allow this gentleman to wallow in his riches free of taxation.

But Lord John Russell was determined that the industrious classes in England and Scotland should pay for his “political blunder;” on the 25th January, 1847, in his place in the House of Commons, he declares—

“With respect to the money which had been already expended, and which was now to be expended on Public Works in Ireland, a claim had been advanced that the whole of it should not be made a burden upon that country. Considering how extensive the calamity was, he thought it would be only right that the whole burden should not fall on Ireland. He therefore should propose, on a future day, that, in each succeeding year, as each instalment was paid, *one-half should be remitted*. Keeping up the whole debt until the one-half of it was paid, and then throwing the other half on the public.”

It can be no matter of surprise, therefore, that both Englishmen and Scotchmen should consider it a hardship to be obliged to pay for the support of Irishmen, and that their leading journal should denounce them as a nation of beggars; but, although the fact could not have been gainsayed, still it was neither humane nor benevolent to raise such a cry at such a time. Nothing betokens a brutalised mind more than to take advantage of the miseries of those we would wish to crush to accomplish that purpose: to build our fortunes on the ruin of others is not laudable. And “to break the bruised reed” or “quench the smoking flax” is not enjoined to be the practice of a Christian. By the mismanagement and blundering of the Government of Great Britain the nation was coerced to accept a loan from the public purse to meet an unexpected calamity, when there were ample means and plenty of resources in Ireland, which, if vigorously enforced and judiciously ap-

plied, would not unjustly press on any party, but would ultimately be attended with the most beneficial results in improving the country and remunerating the proprietors.

There was great cause of dissatisfaction at this unwise distribution of money, not only for useless but mischievous works, and it called forth the disapprobation of all classes. Not alone of landed proprietors, whose estates were mortgaged for the repayment of this money, but the citizens of Dublin also recorded their condemnation of the measure at a public meeting at the Music-hall, on the 16th March, 1847, by the unanimous adoption of the subjoined resolution:—

“Moved by Philip Dixon Hardy, Esq.; seconded by John Thompson, Esq:—*Resolved*, That the Labour Rate Act provided by the Government, in the place of food, to meet the loss of the potato crop, has frightfully aggravated the sufferings and distresses of the country: that it has not mitigated, and in its nature could not mitigate, the scarcity of food; that it has only tortured before famine consigned the labourer to the grave; and that it has turned the labouring power from the land, where alone it could avert famine in the coming year, to the roads, where it has done mischief; that it has largely increased the incumbrances upon landlords, already ruinously heavy; that it has inflicted a heavy loss on the public treasury, and added to the national burdens; that it has paralysed trade, spread confusion and terror among all classes, and shaken the whole frame-work of society in Ireland; that no measures, which do not increase the inadequate power employed in bringing food from foreign countries, no scheme for giving employment, nor taxation, but food only, can be fitted to our present condition, or stop the ravages of famine, and that if Government will not forthwith employ the ships and money of the State to bring food from other countries, our labouring population will be swept off the land, their employers reduced to destitution, and our merchants and traders to bankruptcy, before another harvest returns.”

WHEN the “*paternal*” Government managed to get hold of the helm of State by out-voting the Government of Sir Robert Peel, on a measure introduced by him for the more effectual Protection of Life and Property in Ireland—whether to evince their love of liberty or pander to the passions of a fierce de-

mocracy—an act called the Arms' Bill (one of their own measures, and an annual one) was about to expire ; it was considered necessary by the Government of Sir Robert Peel, that a clause should be added :—“ That all fire-arms should be numbered and registered by the Constabulary, for the purpose of tracing them if used for murderous purposes, and also for prohibiting parties from lending them for the like or other unlawful purposes.”

Contrary to the remonstrances of many who saw, that from the disordered state of society in Ireland, the indiscriminate use of fire-arms amongst the peasantry, even with the restrictions then in force, made murders an event of weekly occurrence, the Government allowed that act to expire ; and, to add to the grace and favour of the indulgence, the Chief Secretary of Ireland (Mr. Labouchere), proclaimed “ the right of carrying arms for lawful objects, which every Irishman now possesses.”

This announcement fanned the flame which burned in the minds of the peasantry, not alone of the disaffected, but stimulated the inordinate passion for the possession of fire-arms that is proverbial amongst all classes in Ireland. Accordingly, large quantities of fire-arms of the lowest description were imported, and whatever way the money to purchase them was raised, the vendors found plenty of buyers ; insomuch, that on the 3d day of November, 1846, in the town of Clonmel, the capital of Tipperary, one hundred and thirty-eight stand of arms were sold ; and, in the short space of one month, 12,000 stand of arms were bought by the peasantry in that blood-stained county.

This formidable addition to the fire-arms already in the country, soon convinced the Government of their imprudence, by the alarming increase of crime and the numbers of additional murders that were daily chronicled in the newspapers, and officially reported to the Government. The demand for fire-arms still continued, and the advertisements of those

hawkers who sold them in the public streets, headed by the royal arms of England, with the quotation—"The right of carrying arms for lawful objects, which every Irishman now possesses." These circumstances plainly demonstrated the necessity of some restriction to counteract the effect of such an impolitic step, and the same functionary was placed in the unenviable and unbecoming position of being obliged to issue the following caution:—

"Dublin Castle, 3d December, 1847.

"His Excellency's attention having been directed to the frequent outrages committed by armed parties, directs me to bring under your notice the act of 15th and 16th George III., chap. 21, sec. 2., which states—'Any person or persons being armed by fire-arms, firelock, pistol, or any other offensive weapon, who shall use, assemble, or appear by day or by night, to the terror of his Majesty's subjects, is guilty of a high misdemeanour, and punishable by fine or imprisonment.

"H. LABOUCHERE."

The imprudence of allowing fire-arms into the hands of the peasantry was particularly noticed and condemned by Lord Chief Justice Blackburne in his charge to the Grand Jury of the County of Tipperary, at the following Spring Assizes, and by Baron Lefroy at the Longford Assizes at the same time; and the following resolution was adopted by the Grand Jury of the County of Tipperary after the charge of his Lordship:—

"That we feel it to be our imperative duty to give expression to the anxiety and alarm with which we have witnessed the recent extensive and rapidly increasing acquisition of fire-arms by the peasantry of this county.

"That we consider the danger arising from this circumstance as greatly aggravated by the prevailing destitution, as the evil-disposed always avail themselves of such a state of things, as a pretext for crime and outrage.

"That we, therefore, solemnly warn the Government of the dangers likely to result to the peace of society, from such an arming of the masses at such a period, and earnestly beseech them to apply some efficient and timely remedy to an evil which must otherwise lead to the most disastrous consequences."

The Grand Jury of the County of Kilkenny adopted a similar resolution:—

“ We, the undersigned Grand Jurors of the County of Kilkenny, cannot separate without expressing our deep horror and regret at the dreadful murder of Arthur Prim, Esq., pay-clerk, and of John Yates, police constable, yesterday morning, in this county. This awful event exhibits, most forcibly, the mischievous tendency of the indiscriminate sale of fire-arms, by which life and property are brought into jeopardy every day. Persons who are not trustworthy, on account of their dissolute characters, are permitted to purchase arms as they think fitting, and others, who, possessed of property, may be supposed entitled to carry them for its defence, have, in numerous instances, surrendered them without opposition when demanded by midnight assassins.”

Notwithstanding these denunciations and recommendations, while the Government allowed the evil to progress with all its fearful results, without prohibiting the sale of those instruments of death, such an act would have saved a vast sum to the nation ; for, in order to preserve any thing like social order, a large military force was required, as well as a considerable addition to the constabulary, the appointment of stipendary magistrates also, and the expense of prosecuting and punishing assassins, was a fearful waste of money. And as the Irish Constabulary are paid out of the Imperial Exchequer, the people of England and Scotland had to bear their part of this expense, as well as the mischievous Labour Bill.

Twelve months had not expired after the date of the proclamation—“ The right of carrying arms for lawful objects, which every Irishman now possesses,” when the Secretary of State for the Home Department appeals to the Legislature for extraordinary powers to check the frightful increase of crime from the use of fire-arms, and grounds his argument from the following return :—

<i>For the Six Months ending 1845.</i>		<i>For Six Months ending Oct., 1847.</i>	
Homicides,	11	Homicides,	96
Attempts upon life, by firing } at the person, ... }	55	Attempts upon life, by firing } at the person, ... }	126
Robbery of Arms,	207	Robbery of Arms,	530
Firing into dwelling houses,	51	Firing into dwelling houses,	116

Was there anything more humiliating than for the Government to ask a Coercion Bill, based on such a statement which

trenched most materially on the liberty of the subject, deranged the social state of the country, saddled it with a heavy additional expense for carrying it into operation, when their own unwise conduct was the principal if not the sole cause?

The following circumstance, that came under my own observation fifteen years ago, will illustrate the difficulty of dispossessing the peasantry of fire-arms:—An uneducated peasant, who appeared to be without a second idea in his head, kept a gun for several years, not two miles distant from a police station, and the residence of a magistrate, whose game he occasionally thinned. The police being aware of his having the gun, took every means in their power to deprive him of it, by repeated and unexpected visits, and after the most scrutinizing searches he baffled all their plans and eluded their vigilance. However, one day he happened to be at his favourite diversion, shooting out of a boat on the river, and after bringing down a brace of wild duck, the police were attracted to the spot by the report of the gun, and seeing him lift his game, they accosted him by saying, ‘That was a capital shot.’ ‘Yes,’ he replied, ‘better than you could do it.’ ‘Give up the gun,’ demanded the constable. ‘Don’t you wish you may get it?’ was his rejoinder. He then immediately took the oars, and with his sinewy arms soon reached his domicile, and mentioning what transpired to his wife, they both, without much hesitation, went to an adjacent town about three miles from their home. On his return he was arrested by the police. During his examination he denied being there at all, and asserted he was in a position to prove that he was in the town with his wife transacting business. The magistrate asked him to name his witness, and the writer of this narrative was given as the reference. Accordingly I was sent for by the magistrate—(I at the time being ignorant of the transaction.) In reply to the query, ‘Do you know the man?’—‘Yes.’ ‘Did you see him on such a day in such place?’—‘Yes.’ ‘About what hour?’—‘As well as I can recollect

about one o'clock in the afternoon.' 'Liberate the man,' was the decision of the magistrate. Whereupon my friend was released, and a great crowd of his neighbours and friends, that were waiting with intense anxiety outside, when the result was announced, cheered me through the town, and their plaudits caused such a sensation that I shall not readily forget them. So much for the difficulty of curing the evil.

SUCH then is a brief outline of the short, inglorious, and disastrous career of the present Ministry, not yet four years in office, and of the measures they brought forward to meet a calamity which, although of great magnitude, required only a little energy, a vigorous execution of the power, and an application of the means within their reach to combat successfully the perils of the crisis without loss of life or serious detriment to any existing interest. It would appear, however, from a review of the preceding, that the noble Lord was not adequate to the emergency—that he had not the mind to plan, the heart to dare, or the hand to execute those measures which the exigency of the crisis imperatively demanded; although, perhaps, it was more his misfortune than his fault. And as it betokens as much greatness of mind to acknowledge and confess a fault as to be incapable of committing it, the noble Lord, with a frankness worthy of the greatest commendation, admits, in his place in Parliament, on Monday, 31st May, 1847 :—“ *He (Lord John Russell) did not mean to say that the measures which the Government had taken to meet the great and unparalleled calamity were those which the utmost wisdom could have devised.*”

But the mere admission of incompetency was not a sufficient equivalent to the nation for the amount of injury inflicted by the mal-administration of men who had not, by their own admission, the wisdom to foresee or the fidelity to perform the duties commensurate to the crisis. It is evident that every step taken was in the wrong direction; every panacea pre-

scribed only probed the wound deeper and aggravated the disease. The impolitic and criminal protection afforded to the corn merchants had the effect of raising provisions to prices they had never before reached, and the want of which consigned more than two millions of human beings to premature (in many instances coffinless) graves; and, according to the prediction of Sir Randolph Routh, afterwards "*worked its own cure*," by destroying not alone the avaricious speculator, but the honest merchant: for, in the month of October alone, there were failures to the amount of fifteen millions and one-half sterling in the corn trade. And the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his place in Parliament, on Tuesday, 30th November, 1847, stated:—"The great bulk of the failures were those of houses engaged in the corn trade; and these failures were mainly to be attributed to the sudden fall in the price of corn; and all those who had speculated in that commodity, and had miscalculated, HAD PAID THE PENALTY." What a consolation it was to those misguided individuals who had lost the fruits of the industry of the previous part of their lives, and involved their families, likely their friends, in ruin, by endeavouring to make fortunes in a day, and who were encouraged and protected by the Government, which now reproached them for their misfortune. On the same occasion, the same personage stated—"That for the six months ending in January, 1847, the amount paid for foreign corn was £5,139,000; and for the six months ending in July, 1847, £14,184,000; and, in the three months just past, it had reached the enormous amount of £14,240,000, being upwards of £33,000,000 in fifteen months:" and the Earl of Mountcashel in a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the 20th October, 1847, computes the aggregate loss of the United Kingdom at £500,000,000 sterling for twelve months. From the amount of fictitious capital afloat, in the shape of accommodation bills of exchange, the bankers saw that a crash was inevitable; and, in self-defence, limited their discounts and

charged the enormous sum of ten per cent. on any paper they negotiated, which nearly paralyzed all legitimate trade. Nine-tenths of the factories were obliged to be closed; the few mills at work were only on short time, and the vast number of people consequently thrown out of employment was frightful to contemplate. We are now after witnessing the ravages of starvation, accompanied by the desolating hand of pestilence, and seeing the gradual decline of the empire—its resources crippled; its commerce almost destroyed; its manufacturers embarrassed; its artisans starving, and without a ray of hope to enliven the darkness of the surrounding horizon.

Such then is the climax of misfortunes—the acme of the national malady; and unless some skilful physician take the patient out of the empirical hands that has almost consummated its destruction, it will be lost without recovery; indeed the words of the poet appear not inapplicable:—

“As when some dire usurper Heaven provides
To scourge his country with a lawless sway,
His birth, perhaps, some petty village hides,
And sets his cradle out of Fortune’s way
Till fully ripe his swelling fate breaks out,
And hurries him to mighty mischiefs on—
His prince surprised, at first no ill could doubt,
And wants the power to meet it when ’tis known.”

If we are to look back to past circumstances, we will find that a Whig administration was never an auspicious one for this empire. Under them Great Britain lost her North American colonies; the cholera devastating the Continent of Europe; a rebellion in Canada under Papineau; the Chinese War; four successive years of commercial depression at home, and deficient harvests; all this occurred during the Whig administration, which, having come into office with a surplus revenue of four millions, they *managed* to leave a deficit of more than the same amount before they were ignominiously expelled from office by a vote of censure of the House of Commons, and an Income and Property Tax were necessarily imposed on England and Scotland to make good that sum, to equalise the income of

the country to its expenditure, thus rescuing the empire from bankruptcy ; and, still more recently, under the present Whig Ministry, Great Britain was obliged to witness the infraction of the treaty of Vienna, for the observance of which, the national honour of this empire was pledged, in addition to the disgrace of her Ambassador's expulsion from the once friendly court of Spain.

After a careful and impartial consideration of the mismanagement and inability of this Government, there is one question that prominently presents itself and demands an answer, and that is—Would Ireland, with a Parliament of her own, have suffered such a series of calamities ? 'Tis true there is something noble, chivalrous, and laudable in endeavouring honestly to work out the regeneration of one's native land ; to raise her in the scale of nations ; to make her sons free, contented, and happy ; to improve the moral, social, and physical condition of the people ; to develop her resources ; and cause the sound of the anvil, the fly of the shuttle, and the revolution of the wheel, to be heard from one end of the isle to the other ; and not to allow Ireland, with all her natural advantages, from her geographical position, her temperate climate, her fruitful soil, her hardy peasantry, her water-power, her mines, and other industrial resources, to remain undeveloped and neglected.

But, before we suppose that all these calamities would have been averted by the wisdom of a native Parliament, we must bear in mind that since the Union there were not so many Irishmen connected with the Government as at the present. There are the Post-Master-General and Master of the Mint ; Cabinet Ministers ; two Lords of the Treasury, the Comptroller of the Exchequer, the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and his Under Secretary, the Lord Chancellor, the Irish Attorney and Solicitor Generals. With such a phalanx of Irishmen in the Government it is reasonable to presume that Irish interests

were fully represented, and yet we find that Irish affairs were never so fearfully mismanaged.

And when the noble Lord to whom this pamphlet is dedicated, saw, that amongst the Irish members of Parliament, there was not one to come forward and grapple with the evil or introduce a beneficial measure, he proposed, as a means to give employment to the starving millions of Ireland, that a sum of sixteen millions should be lent by the Government for the execution of railways in Ireland; and, paradoxical as it may appear, amongst the members who voted against that measure, there were found thirty-one Irish members:—seven Repealers, twenty-one Whigs, and three Conservatives.

After such an insidious dereliction of duty—a base abandonment of the national interest, a pusillanimous defection from the ranks of their country's friends, can it be reasonably supposed that *such* conduct would convince the community that Irishmen were the most faithful guardians of Irish rights, and that Irish interests would be fostered, and prove successful under their auspices.

There is a tide in the affairs of nations as well as of individuals, which, if taken advantage of, is sure to float the ark into the desired haven. Never did this tide flow so propitiously as during the eventful year of 1847, when the cry was raised against supporting a nation of beggars, and the connexion was denounced a loss instead of a gain. The indefeasible argument could have been then raised:—We have plenty of resources within ourselves to supply our own wants; we abjure your assistance; we scorn to be suppliants for your benevolence. You have mismanaged our affairs, and if you refuse to make good the defects caused by your ignorance of our wants and your incompetency to legislate beneficially for us and profitably for yourselves, you have one alternative—cancel the bargain, abrogate the connexion, and get shut of this vexatious and ruinous compact. This would have told

more pointedly than the bristle of 20,000 bayonets and more eloquently than iron thunder from the cannon's mouth.

But the tide was allowed to ebb; the opportune moment passed by unheeded; the clamourers for *nationality* were silenced by the Government patronage, and the aphorism verified—

“Most men will be true to their own private ends,
Though false to their country, religion, and friends.”

It would be almost impossible while recording the circumstances of those days, not to advert to that astonishing man, the late Daniel O'Connell, termed “Ireland's Liberator,” who, on one occasion, denounced the Whigs as base, bloody, and brutal, but at this time eulogised them as ‘the Paternal Government!’ But this is easily accounted for. In the course of a few months after their accession to office, his son was promoted to a situation of £1500 per annum; his son-in-law was made a police magistrate; his physician an inspector of prisons; his nephew to a situation in the Board of Works; and many other inferior appointments not published. The repeal of the Act of Union was cushioned. What was before recommended to be had at any hazard, without brooking delay or admitting of a compromise, was now postponed *sine die*, the Government having connived at and supported Repeal* for the purpose of embarrassing and ousting Sir Robert Peel and his colleagues from office, and when the state manœuvre succeeded, prosecuted the few honest Repealers who would not barter the sacred cause of liberty for place, patronage, or pay; these men attested the sincerity of their motives by risking their properties and perilling their lives by rashly having recourse to the abstract right of the sword, to accomplish their darling project. But while there is unspeakable cause for thankfulness to a Superior Being, for averting the bloody revolution that was considered certain, and had actually commenced, the conduct of the men who connived at it, as an

* Her Majesty's Attorney General for Ireland voted for the Repeal candidate at the last election for the city of Dublin.

expedient to reinstate themselves in office, and which led to the incipient rebellion, is not the less to be execrated. But it did this much good at least, that it called forth a determined response from the loyal subjects of the Crown, and proved that, in an emergency, they were neither few nor false, even in Ireland, who were ready and willing to support their sovereign and constitution, and demonstrated to the tottering empires of Europe that in the British empire a revolutionary movement should not be successful, having the motto *Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari* engraven on and cherished in their hearts.

But, it must be admitted, that many who gloried in the British constitution, and prized the privilege of being born under its influence, and governed and protected by its laws—the best still in the world, although often badly administered—were so disgusted by the recent conduct of its legislators, that they were anxious to escape from its shores, as if some pestilential scourge was waiting there to prey upon them, leaving their once happy homes, dear to them by many sacred ties; some of them, perhaps, exclaiming as the Canadian Indians did when once solicited to emigrate:—“What,” they replied, “shall we say to the bones of our fathers: Arise and go with us to a foreign land!” And, it is no matter of surprise, that British subjects should be disgusted at these new systems; these recent innovations; the destruction of these safe-guards, and the levelling of those bulwarks which has secured to Great Britain her wealth and her fame, made her be respected as well as feared by the nations of the earth. Others felt that they were only made the stepping stones for trading politicians to walk into places of emolument, and obliged to contribute a portion of their hard earnings, in many instances under the threat of denunciation by ecclesiastical tyranny, to pursue the splendid phantom of Repeal, or “to hear of *the something* to their advantage,” at the same time never imagining how often they were bought and sold. The forty-shilling freeholders were the price of a seat in

Parliament for Mr. O'Connell. The Repealers were next brought to the hammer by that arch-crusader, when federalism was considered a more convenient instrument to oust the Conservatives and replace the Whigs; and, of course, as before, the Irish patronage was to have been the *consideration*. But the honest advocates of federalism, the Earl of Charlemont and Sharman Crawford, declined the proffered adhesion, and all that the "speculator" gained by the *ruse* was, the deserved chastisement from Charles Gavan Duffy. From that day, when political delinquency the most flagrant was exposed, and so fatal to the consistency of the "Liberator," until the great sale of Repeal was effected, Old and Young Ireland were

"Like a jarring man and wife,
Yet unwilling still to part;"

but, when the bargain was duly perfected, then hostilities in good earnest commenced, and the belligerents waged and fought the memorable battle of the "forces." But Omnipotence, as if to mark His high displeasure of such traffick in human minds, struck down two of the high contracting parties; and, before one was cold in the tomb—interred with all the pageantry of extravagance and regalia of nonsense—the news arrived that the great salesman, in a foreign land, had expired in the pangs of remorse. It was reported that he refused to take the medicines prescribed during his last illness, and died of congestion of the brain. Every man is more or less his own physician, and understands his constitution best. This appears to have been the case in this instance. He knew full well that no medicine could cure a disordered mind: and our bones are not brass, nor our flesh iron, that we can bear the lashes of a guilty conscience. The sacred cause of liberty will always call forth spirits from the vasty deep; but it is another thing to send them back again. The phantasmagora of our own creation may be too strong for us ere we are aware of it: and there need be no mystification about this matter, that he that was called into political life by him who is now no

more, even Thomas Francis Meagher, the stripling of twenty-five, prostrated Daniel O'Connell, the political giant (as he often called himself) of seventy-six. And what was the missile that brought this Goliath to the dust?—Political honesty. His foul tongue had invaded the quiet of the domestic circle as well as assailed every social body, and every constituted authority, in that school for scandal, falsely called Conciliation Hall. His constant boast was—"I am the best abused man in the world!"—being noticed too much by the newspapers, whose stock in trade he was. But here lay his city of refuge. This was his tower of defence. He considered it to be the charter of his liberties to assail, malign, and calumniate, by the coarsest invectives and vulgar abuse. Even his own followers were not exempt: for, when it would suit his purpose, he would flatter their vanity with the most fulsome adulation; but, if they dared to venture an opinion inimical to his, he would chastise them with the most unrelenting severity. If the reader will only take the trouble to cast a glance over the index of any periodical publication which records the events of those times, he will find, in the letter O, under the head O'Connell, abuse of the Wesleyan Methodists; abuse of the Freemasons (by whom he was expelled in April, 1838); abuse of the Chartists; abuse of the English Radicals; nay, even of the English women; abuse of the King of Hanover, of the late Duke of York, of George III., of George IV., of the English aristocracy, of the Irish aristocracy, of the French Government, and especially of the French King; to say nothing of his onslaught upon Percival, Liverpool, Wellington, and Peel, and the head of every Tory ministry, upon the Established Church, on the Dublin University, on the Judges of the land, and, to cap the climax, the Pope himself, the infallible head of his own church, whose propaganda he denounced as uncanonical, and said it should not be obeyed, because he (the Pope) commanded the Catholic clergy in Ireland not to interfere in political agitation.

Numerous opinions were volunteered as to the cause of the calamity of 1846 and 1847. Many thought there must have been unprecedented wickedness in the land that caused the out-pouring of such an unprecedented vial of wrath. Some ascribed it to the additional endowment of Maynooth College, which was voted in 1845, submitting the precedent of Catholic Emancipation in 1829, which was succeeded by the cholera in 1830; adding, that there was a striking coincidence even in the dates—the college of Maynooth was re-endowed in 1845, the famine in 1846; and the emancipation bill was passed in 1829, the cholera followed in 1830; precisely the following years in both cases. Others stated that individual sins cause national calamities, and that the vaunting arrogance of O'Connell in marshalling his followers was analagous to the haughty display of King David, when he numbered the children of Israel, which so offended the Almighty, that he was obliged to choose one of three punishments that were submitted to him, and from which he was obliged to make his selection, and his wise choice was to fall into the hands of his Maker rather than man. And we read—"There died of the people, from Dan even unto Beersheba, seventy thousand men."—2 SAMUEL, xxiv., 15. Others thought that it was a just punishment on the people for their ingratitude in contemning the choicest blessing that ever was conferred on this or any other country—the much-maligned, but now much regretted, potato. That presumptuous mortal (O'Connell) had the infamous effrontery of denouncing it as food only fit for swine; but he soon found how contingent his revenue was on this swinish food, and when one failed, the other ceased altogether.

FROM the following figures it will appear what an enormous quantity of grain there was drawn off for brewing and distillation in the year 1847, which should have been appropriated

for human food, more especially as there was a substitute available, both abundant and cheap, which would neither have affected the revenue nor interfered with the brewer and distiller, but would have been a vast saving to the consumer:—

With regard to barley, it appeared that during the first six months of 1846, the average price of barley, per quarter, was 28s. It was, in 1847, 54s. per quarter, being an advance of nearly 100 per cent. Let us look at the operation of this advance. According to *The Economist* paper of 24th Oct., 1846, there are 1,248,000 quarters of barley used in distillation, and 7,500,000 quarters used in brewing—making, together, a yearly absorption of 8,748,000 quarters; which, in round numbers, might be assumed at 9,000,000 of quarters yearly. Now, it is calculated that one quarter of wheat is sufficient to support one person for a year, and making an allowance for the difference of weight between wheat and barley, nine millions of quarters of the latter would be equivalent for the support of between six and seven millions of persons. Here, then, by saving these nine millions from absorption in brewing and distillation, we provide food for about one-fourth of the population of the United Kingdom. Applying the same data, let us look at the operation of the enhancement of barley in a pecuniary point of view. Nine millions of quarters at 54s. gives £24,350,000 as the cost of barley used, whereas the same quantity at the average price before the advance of 28s. would only cost £12,600,000, shewing the increase of cost in material to the brewer and distiller, and ultimately to the consumer, of £11,750,000, or, in round numbers, £12,000,000. Next, in regard to the prices of sugar, we shall find it low and tending downwards. *The Economist* states the stock of sugar in Europe to have been 50 per cent. larger than at the same period last year—the prices also varying from 10 to 30 per cent. below those of last year. But, besides this, the crops of sugar were unusually large, both in the British colonies and in foreign countries. It was calculated that the importations

during the year 1847, would be 385,000 tons, from which deducting 260,000 tons, as a large allowance for our own consumption, in the shape of sugar, there will be left an excess of supply beyond our ordinary wants of 125,000 tons—an excess which, unless drawn off for brewing or distillation, must unavoidably cause a still farther prostration of prices, in addition to the evils to which the colonist has been already subjected, who would be poorly compensated by any little advantages which the consumer in this country might derive from it. Such being the scarcity and the high price of barley on the one hand, and the plenty and cheapness of sugar on the other, let us look at their combined effects. The equivalent in sugar for brewing and distillation is stated at 185lbs., and the difference between malt and barley being, according to *The Economist*, 20 per cent., we may assume the equivalent of one quarter of barley to be 140lbs. weight of sugar. By this rule, nine million quarters of barley are equivalent to 11,250,000 cwt. of sugar, which, at 21s. for foreign sugar, and 28s. for colonial, shews a cost of £11,812,500 on the former, and £15,750,000 upon the latter, which costs being deducted from £24,350,000, as the present cost of nine millions of quarters at 54s. leave £12,337,500, as the saving on the use of foreign sugar, and £8,600,000 as the saving on the use of colonial sugar, from the substitution of sugar for barley. It is also stated that the colonial sugar being almost wholly required for ordinary consumption, the principal consumption of brewing and distilling would be of foreign sugar. These data and calculations, which are principally taken from *The Economist* papers of the 4th and 9th October, 1846, present a saving not only of so large a portion of food, but also comparatively cheap prices to the consumer of beer and spirits. In regard to the effect of the proposed changes upon the revenue, in as far as distillation is concerned, the duty being charged upon the manufactured spirit, it can make no difference in the revenue whether that spirit be made from barley

or from sugar, excepting so far as the reduced cost of spirits from sugar would increase the consumption, and consequently the quantity paying duty.

Although Lord John Russell was in possession of these details, he seemed determined not to interfere, as will appear from his reply to the memorial presented from Glasgow, which suggested the necessity of prohibiting the use of barley for distillation.

“Downing-street, 16th October, 1846.

“Lord John Russell is deeply sensible of the calamity which now presses so heavily on the poorer classes of the United Kingdom, owing to the almost failure of the potato crop, &c. I have also been instructed to inform you that it is not the intention of the Government to prohibit the distillation from grain.

(Signed),

“R. W. GRAY.”

Another recommendation I made to the Premier was the necessity of reducing, during the crisis, the duty on tea, which would have afforded the poor a wholesome, nutritious, and economical beverage. The duty on tea is 2s. 2½d. per lb., and fully 150 per cent on the average value, and amounting on some of the lower qualities to about 300 per cent. The deliveries for 1848, were 31,838,000lbs. Now, if the duty were reduced to 1s. per lb., there would have been a saving of more than one million and a half sterling to the consumer; and, from the increased consumption, consequent on the cheapness, the probability is that a considerable gain would revert to the revenue; and the reduction of postage is a safe precedent, as well as a demonstrative evidence of this; but, looking at it in the worst light, and, for argument sake, admitting the certainty of a loss on the one hand, and the surplus revenue that existed on the other, was it commendable or humane, considering the scarcity and high price of food and the thousands that were dying for the want of it, not to have relaxed the duty on that article, which would have averted a great deal of the mischief, as well as materially conduced to the support and comfort of the people?

From the following calculations it will be seen what a revenue could have been raised from the imposition of the *direct* taxes, and the saving that could have been effected to the consumer from the measures recommended in 1846:—

Funded property of Ireland and interest,	£42,000,000	0	0
Expenditure of Do.,	5,000,000	0	0
Rental of Do., £13,500,000	}	4,500,000	0
Amount drawn by Absentees and other incumbrancers,... 9,000,000			
Profits from trade,	1,620,680	0	0
Income from professions,	500,000	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£53,620,680	0	0
	<hr/>		
Deduct 3 per cent. for income and property tax,	}	£1,608,620	0
Deduct 10 per cent. off Absentees' portion,			
		900,000	0
	<hr/>		
	£2,508,620	0	0
	<hr/>		

From the above table we make up a fund of two millions and a half, allowing the difference to be struck off for salaries and incomes not amounting to £150 per annum; we also save to the consumer, by the substitution of molasses and sugar for grain, for brewing and distillation, £8,000,000; we save by the reduction of the duty on tea, £500,000; and all these put together would be more than the parliamentary grants and loans which were voted from the Imperial Exchequer for employing the people on useless and mischievous public works.

I have collected these figures from the most correct sources, and the estimates must be admitted as unobjectionable in their general bearings.

These are no idle theories or vague generalities, but stubborn facts. If they were adopted, carried out, and applied, there would have been no necessity for Government loans, or trespassing on the industry of others: we could have borne our own burdens, and we were able to meet our own difficulties out of our own resources, even though great, unparalleled, and unexpected as the visitation was. Yet with such feelings of our own independence we cannot but feel grateful for the charitable donations from the English people and others; they were large and munificent, given in a spirit of Christian commiseration, and will do more to cement the union between the two countries than all the parchment compacts that ever were executed; and although the matter was made use of to contrast the generous qualities of a rich nation with the *ungrateful* acknowledgments of a poor one, by newspapers, they have failed to accomplish their unchristian and vicious designs. The donations that have been given to an integral part of the empire, which would have been and were given to a foreign nation under similar circumstances, have been gratefully acknowledged, and will be as gratefully remembered.

The great question that presents itself is—What good will emanate from these gleanings and figures—now that the crisis is over you cannot cure the past? My answer is—A periodical famine is not now-a-days *rara avis in terris*; and, as “knowledge is power,” it may be useful to know the measures proposed and how applied, and what have been their corresponding results during the late eventful and ever memorable crisis; it may point out to some succeeding statesman who may be placed, perhaps, in similar circumstances, with similar duties and similar responsibilities, to avoid a policy that has entailed so much mischief, misery, and death; it may enable him not to mistake the wild clamours of interested agitators for the sage advice of public opinion, or the inordinate passion of mad speculation for the steady and wholesome course of legitimate trade; never to make promises but those that

can be fulfilled to the letter—as was the case in the seed-corn affair—and not to dash from the lip of hope the cup of amelioration, and that he should estimate, above all things, that the lives of the people are paramount to any other consideration, and should be the special object of a statesman's care. It is indeed unreasonable, as well as unjust, to be constantly intruding on the industry of others. We will occasionally relieve our friends in distress, but we grow weary of and object to the constant practice of it. It is incompatible with, as well as inimical to the laws of human nature. We must all earn our bread by the sweat of our brow; that is the irrevocable decree, and cannot be either annulled or over-ruled.

If a commercial firm have different branches of an establishment in different places, with the same advantages, and one branch fails to pay its own current expenses, the maintenance of its staff, &c., it cannot be allowed to remain a drag on or depending to the head establishment; its directory must be changed, its system altered, and radically modified in all its departments, and must contribute a living profit over and above the cost of management. Should it fail, after being re-organised, to add its proportion to the general prosperity, it should be finally abandoned. If it prospers under the new system, it is evident that either incapacity or neglect on the part of the managers retarded its prosperity. This is exactly the case of Ireland; its natural advantages are equal, if not superior, to the other branches of the imperial establishment. And I assert, and I hope have proved, that it has been fearfully mismanaged and grievously neglected, and never so lamentably as during the late crisis. It is evident a new directory must be appointed, a radical change effected, both at the parent as well as in the branch establishment, particularly in the departments of the agriculture and commerce of the latter. It wants labour, machinery, and capital. These are the chief elements required to make a nation prosperous, happy, and great. And, of all the three, labour is by far the

most important desideratum. Labour can make machinery and capital, but neither machinery nor capital can produce labour. If there are, as has been computed, nearly four million acres of reclaimable waste land in Ireland, and were these wastes reclaimed what a considerable addition to the wealth of the country would they be; and, of course, the principal agent in accomplishing this would be labour. If arterial drainage, the building of piers, and the deep sea fisheries, are undeveloped sources of national wealth—safe and profitable investments and wide fields for speculation and enterprise—is not labour the necessary and principal agent? If our latent mines lie buried in the bowels of the earth, is not labour the principal agent required to explore and work them? And, as a matter of course, railways will be required to carry their produce; and the most essential agent for the execution of railways is labour. But, unfortunately, the feeling has taken hold of the minds of the strong and able-bodied, the bone and sinew of the country, that there is a field more remunerating for their labour than that of their native land. And the thousands that are emigrating is a melancholy proof of this, taking all the wealth they can with them, and leaving the aged and infirm as a first charge on the land. But when these three constituents, labour, capital, and machinery, accompanied by education, and repose from agitation, are skillfully amalgamated, Ireland will pay her way, aye, and contribute a respectable quota to the imperial wealth, and there will be a perfect bond of union established; then, and not until then, will the respective branches of the empire harmonize sweetly together.

Repeal will not be preached either as a bugbear or recommended as a panacea. We shall then look back, not for the restoration of the Brehon law and the old system of Irish chieftainries, but with pleasure we shall reflect that the charter of our liberties, and the right to and the benefits we derive from our constitution, arise from our connexion with England. We will adopt the language which Grattan expressed in

the Irish House of Commons, on the 16th April, 1782:—
 “The people of this kingdom have never expressed a desire to share the freedom of England without declaring a determination to share her fate likewise—standing or falling with the British constitution.” Away then with the demon that would still wander among the tombs to hold communion with the evil things of by-gone days, and, by an infernal necromancy, call from the grave the hideous spectres of forgotten feuds, and make Ireland again the battle-ground for political and party strifes, and convulse the present day with the guilt and the passions of the past.

I cannot more appropriately conclude this essay than by the introduction of the following well known and much admired remarks of the gifted Curran:—

“I speak in the spirit of the British law, which makes liberty commensurate with and inseparable from British soil; which proclaims even to the stranger and sojourner, the moment he sets his foot upon British earth, that the ground on which he treads is holy, and consecrated by the genius of UNIVERSAL EMANCIPATION. No matter in what language his doom may have been pronounced—no matter what complexion incompatible with freedom an Indian or an African sun may have burnt upon him—no matter in what disastrous battle his liberty may have been cloven down—no matter with what solemnities he may have been devoted upon the altar of slavery—the first moment he touches the sacred soil of Britain, the altar and the God sink together in the dust—his soul walks abroad in her own majesty—his body swells beyond the measure of his chains, that burst from around him—and he stands redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled by the irresistible genius of UNIVERSAL EMANCIPATION.

THE END.



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